REMINISCENCES OF NEWCASTLE, IOWA

1848

A History of the Founding of Webster City, Iowa

Narrated by

Sarah Brewer-Bonebright

Written by her daughter

Harriet Bonebright-Closz

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Webster City, Iowa

Historical Department of Iowa
Des Moines
1921

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DEDICATED

To

EMMA HELME-STRATTON,

Friend of my youth and mature years,
whose unfailing friendship, steadfast devotion and
constant encouragement have furnished a full
measure of inspiration for these reminis-
cent pages of pioneer life.

THE AUTHOR.

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WILSON BREWER.

SARAH BREWER-BONEBRIGHT
At 50.

MARGARET MOORE-
BREWER.

SARAH BREWER-BONEBRIGHT,
84TH YEAR, NARRATOR.

HARRIET BONEBRIGHT-CLOSZ,
AUTHOR.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

Carved on the lintel of one of the great state structures at Des Moines are the words IOWA HISTORICAL MEMORIAL AND ART BUILDING. They impart the scope and depth of interest our state takes in her people of the past, present and future. In directing the activities of this Department of state government the Curator publishes or encourages the publication of pertinent facts and traditions of all eras of state and territorial history and promotes their use in Iowa schools, libraries and publications. It is believed that to successfully discharge this one of the many responsibilities of the office is to promote love of home, state and nation, a passion which throughout history has stood a silent guardian at each post of peril to human liberty. No one can measure the effect of admiration for domestic and public idols, formed from the folk-lore and legends in the character of the world's heroes in war, saints in religion, leaders in enterprise. And nearly all these, in America, have had their idols from the period within or very near the establishment of home life on the virgin soil.

Iowa settlements were of men with axe in one hand and rifle in the other, leading families into life without convenience; of women following gladly away from life with comfort, often luxury. Children bred here where there were few if any markets, churches, courts of record, means of transportation of persons, property or intelligence, no matter what their antecedents, their race or language, witnessed and often encountered ills and hazards making of later battles and achievements mere matters of course. On every acre of the Iowa frontier occurred acts of moral and physical heroism, noble if not bloody, as yet unsymbolized in art, inadequately portrayed in literature.

Our heroic era of the Civil war laid down its mass of precious historical materials upon a period that was without spectacular achievement, an understanding of that earlier time is now extremely difficult. Life was without mails, telegraphs, railroads, markets or manufactures as they are organized today. Records of beginnings on Iowa soil are all too scarce and meagre. The historian delves ardently but fruitlessly in most repositories for ample aids. The thin stratum of evidence of civilized life in Iowa of the old wagon days grows thinner with the years, and is enriched with the appearance of the present volume of narratives by one of our pioneers through the faithful writing of her devoted daughter.

The Historical Department of Iowa, therefore, sponsors the appearance of this book as so much evidence so sadly wanting of a day and time with which all are concerned. It disclaims all credit for the labor and expense, for the responsibility for style, scope and matter of this modest work. It is well worth while. Its contributors may well take the greatest satisfaction in having done a public duty while they performed a pleasant personal task.

EDGAR R. HARLAN, *Curator*,
HISTORICAL DEPARTMENT OF IOWA,
DES MOINES.

July 26, 1921.

PREFACE.

The fact that this volume is published under the auspices of the Historical Department of the state of Iowa is evidence of its real historical value, as well as the general accuracy of statement contained therein. It is written in an attractive style, and possesses literary merit in a high degree.

The conditions depicted in the pages of this work are, no doubt, typical of many communities, and they illustrate the struggles and hardships of the pioneer in conquering the wilderness; nor was that life all struggle and hardship; there were many compensations. Life was full and free, self-reliance was a necessity, the blight of selfishness and the greed of the money-grubber were conspicuously absent, and the inter-dependence of the pioneers encouraged and developed a friendship and a spirit of helpfulness and co-operation which stand out in refreshing contrast to the narrow commercialism of the present day. All the finest qualities were developed in pioneer life. Courage, self-reliance, honesty, hospitality, perseverance, patience and kindness were pioneer virtues. Individualism came into flower, and the result was a hardy race of strong, independent, capable, resourceful men and women.

The work of preserving a permanent record of the pioneer life of such a community is seldom attempted. In this instance, it is done comprehensively and well, and one feels in reading each succeeding chapter that the account is a truthful one, and from first-hand information. There is not a dull chapter in the book, and the story shows clearly the early life and times as they actually were. There are few living at the present time who have the faintest conception of the labor, sacrifices and accomplishments of the early settlers.

The narrative by Mrs. Bonebright, daughter of the founder of Newcastle, or Webster City, as it is now called, is written by her daughter, Harriet Closz, and is a faithful

presentation of the recollections of her mother. Much of it has been verified by a search of contemporaneous records and talks with surviving pioneers, as in the chapter on remedies for diseases.

There are some chapters in the book, which aside from the narrative, possess a philosophical and literary value, notably the chapter on the relations of the Whites and the Indians. It must always be borne in mind in considering these relations and in weighing the common opinion on this subject, that the Indians had no opportunity to state their side of the case. The Spirit Lake Massacre never would have taken place had the Indians in Iowa been treated as they were treated by William Penn.

Webster City and Hamilton County furnished one of the companies which visited the scene of the massacre, and Mr. Thomas Bonebright, husband of the narrator, was recognized by the thirty-fifth general assembly of the state of Iowa as one of the honored survivors of the expedition.

The account given as Major Brassfield's of the Lott affair, may be called hearsay, but those living who know the writer and knew the original narrator, accept it as the truth, and it possesses a high historical value. It is complete and probably is the most connected portrayal of the doings of Lott, and is illustrative of his strong antipathy to the Indians. There have been other pioneers who had this strange, unreasoning hatred of the redman, notably the Brady's and other Kentucky pioneers. The reputation of Major Brassfield and Mrs. Bonebright for veracity renders this statement of untold value in clearing up the Lott affair, which has long been a puzzle to investigators. It also bears strongly on the motive for the Spirit Lake Massacre.

Much credit also is due to the Curator of the Historical Department, E. R. Harlan, who has sponsored the work, and furnished many illustrations, valuable suggestions and expert advice on various subjects. The spirit in which Mr. Harlan has extended his assistance deserves more than passing notice.

A work of this kind could be widely used as a text and reference book in our common schools. The account as it appears in these pages of the sterling qualities developed by self-reliant pioneers is a wholesome lesson, and should be of great value in forming the character of the youth of our generation.

It is fortunate that this simple record of pioneer life and achievement can be handed down to successive generations who live in this county. Seldom is such a thing possible, and never to my knowledge, has it been better done. It has a value far beyond the confines of this community. It fills a gap which generally is neglected, and has a historical importance which is state-wide and permanent, and which increases in importance as the years go on.

In these days of comfort and luxury few realize the life of those who first saw the woods and prairies of this beautiful state, who enjoyed to the full the fragrant woods, the wild-flowers, the fish and game, the pure air and clear water, the wild fruits and nuts which abounded everywhere in those days, and which have almost wholly vanished never to return.

In placing these early scenes and the early life of the pioneer before the eyes of present and future generations, Mrs. Bonebright and Mrs. Closz have performed a notable service. To the pioneer we owe much of what we enjoy today.

All honor to the sturdy pioneer,
The prime explorer of the wondrous West;
A broad and crowded thoroughfare is here
Where led the narrow path his foot first pressed.

A love of Nature's beauty stirred his blood;
A wanderlust that hurried him along
To brave the lurking foe, the fire and flood,
But he was patient, resolute and strong.

His prairie schooner crossed the trackless wild
To halt at last in some sequestered place;
Some shelter by a stream yet undefiled,
Mayhap the seat of a forgotten race.

His lowly cabin in the clearing stood;
Of logs rough hewn, and puncheon floor of oak,
Late riven from the giants of the wood,
And fashioned by his axe's cunning stroke.

Alone he wrought; sufficient for the day;
As free as air, and equal to his need;
His manly spirit never owned the sway
Of vice or envy, luxury or greed.

He lit the torch; he blazed the lonesome trail;
Crusader with the vision of the seer!
High courage his; deep faith that could not fail;
All honor to the sturdy pioneer!

D. C. Chase.

Webster City, Iowa,
August 29, 1920.

FOREWORD.

(DICTATED BY SARAH BREWER-BONEBRIGHT.)

These reminiscences are recorded in the first person, because I believe the bond of personal interest may be strengthened and the touch of human sympathy sustained by pursuing that course.

Except in a few instances which touch our family life, I restrict the record to the years immediately following our advent into Iowa, in 1848, before the fuller flow of immigration had begun. I confine myself to the activities and incidents which have not been related in other records of our city, for later historians are numerous and their work has been voluminous and painstaking.

I make no claim for absolute accuracy in dates. Periods marking life epochs such as moving, building, births, weddings or deaths always were vividly impressed, and other incidents arrange themselves approximately in order. The first few years were the best memory markers. I was young, active, alert, and anything of importance was mentally recorded without effort. Exceptional happenings were not numerous, when compared with the present, but many of the events of early years are clearer to me today than those of the past decade.

There is, in this account at least, the advantage of first-hand narrative which eliminates hearsay evidence and obviates, in a large degree, the possibility of inaccuracy which easily may creep into often-related second-hand statements.

These reminiscences may savor somewhat of family history, but such early recital could not be otherwise; for our family alone, made the initial journey to what now is Webster City, and the home of Wilson Brewer furnished the objective point for a community nucleus. My father was the moving spirit in securing and locating additional settlers during the first few years after our arrival.

The pioneer privations of one family were duplicated by all others for more than a decade, and there was no

social preferment. The few hunting and trapping exploits recounted herein, with the members of my own family as the star actors, are related because I am more familiar with these particular ones than with the many others, which perhaps were quite as picturesque or as perilous.

I shall not endeavor to follow the details of the settlement of Homer and Fort Dodge. I made only occasional trips to those hamlets, and during the intervals of absence there was the usual shifting of scenes which I cannot accurately record.

The population of a town was not numbered by its group of residents, but the families throughout the country were listed to the different towns. In referring to Newcastle, now Webster City; Fort Clark, now Fort Dodge; Liberty, now Goldfield; or to Homer, Hook's Point, Boonsboro or Batch Grove, the names simply are to designate parts of the country occupied, for these settlements were not officially named until some time after our arrival.

The land office was opened in Des Moines in 1852. Prior to that time it was necessary to file claims at Washington, D. C. My father's first entry—according to advice from the Department of the Interior—was the southwest quarter of the northwest quarter of section 7, township 88, north, range 25, west of the fifth P. M. Entry number 6131, July 1, 1851. The early settlers, however, frequently staked claims which were sold for ridiculously small amounts, and these squatters' names do not appear on the papers patent.

Many land seekers came west, located claims, and returned to the east for one or two years, perhaps longer. There was very little claim jumping, however. For a long time many of our neighbors were from one to twenty miles apart. They were more or less dependent on each other, and many were quite as friendly and jovially familiar as members of the same family; hence, I express no discourtesy in designating them as: "Jack," "Bill." "Alec,"

"Rube," "Walt," or "Bob" instead of by their longer and more euphoneous appellations.

The details of the pioneer days of Newcastle—the early comers and their habitations, the hardships and privations of isolation, the primitive inadequacy of house and farm implements, the exposure in rigorous weather during hunting, trapping and travel trips—are almost unbelievable by a generation moving along modern lines.

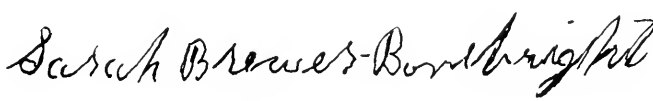
Accounts of the generosity and helpful spirit of pioneers have become proverbial; although one now may doubt the wisdom of such open-handedness especially after the taverns were ready for business. Foodstuffs were scarce and difficult to procure, but they were dispensed freely by us. Whether it be a credit to business judgment or not, I have followed our family custom and never have charged a single cent for meals or lodging during my lifetime.

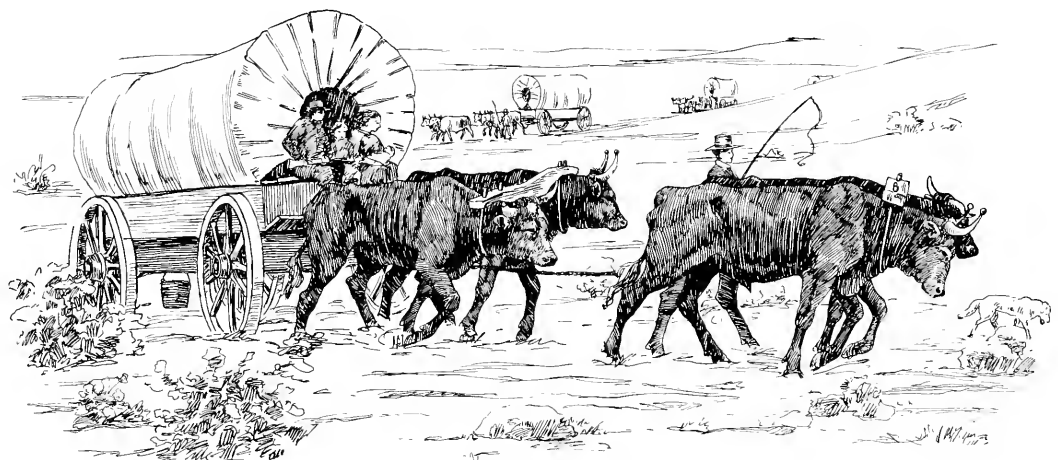
I shall have to admit, after taking a retrospective view, that much of our work could have been made easier by the practical use of brains instead of brute strength. The hardest, most grueling, grinding toil, the most laborious and unceasing methods were always and everywhere in favor, when viewed from the present outlook. It appears to have been necessary that we receive at first hand an application of the principle that: nothing is effective as an educator except it be sufficiently difficult to impress itself upon the mind; no local or larger constructive agency can be made available except through the growing pains which expand and make possible the new order of things.

Looking at the past through the glasses of the present it may be somewhat difficult to understand the pioneers who gazed undaunted upon the uncompromising visage of nature, and braved the angry, inhospitable elements. The humorist may dispose of the subject by declaring: "They were possessed of more courage than common sense"; but the pathfinders, the empire-builders must have lifted the

veil of future events and viewed the scene of opulence and opportunity which their privation and penury were to make possible. My only regret is: in leaving the East, we practically closed schoolhouse doors for the children.

Many of the surroundings and happenings of seventy years ago were painfully commonplace, when compared with the scientific concepts of today; and but for the fact that we have more than three-score years perspective, these reminiscences would have been unworthy the work of preparation.





IOWA IMMIGRANTS.

CHAPTER I.

Making the Trip to Iowa.

Five families with ox teams and covered wagons left Kokomo, Indiana, September 15, 1848, to make the long trip overland to Iowa.

The company comprised the families of my father, Wilson Brewer; Thomas Long; Robert Palmer; William Stanley, a brother-in-law; and William Brewer, a nephew of my father.

There were, in our family, six children ranging in age from a babe in arms to twenty years. William Stanley —"Uncle Billy"—fathered seven youngsters; one son, Nathan, was married just before leaving the Hoosier home; he made the trip with his father. William Brewer—"Little Bill"—had no children, but one or more of our boys or girls constantly were under his care during the journey. There were six lusty lads and two young women in the Thomas Long family, and Mr. and Mrs. Palmer had two children.

Seventeen yokes of cattle, five prairie-schooners and a truck-wagon made up this emigrant train. Of this out-

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AN APPRECIATION AND EXPLANATION.

My mother, Sarah Brewer-Bonebright, is a resident surviving member (1921) of the first family to locate in our present Webster City. She is the daughter of Wilson and Margaret Moore-Brewer, and was born in Henry county, Indiana, in 1837.

I recount these reminiscences of my mother's early life as an acknowledgment of her sterling qualities of head and heart; as a tribute to her tireless effort and unfailing courage; as an expression of approval for her homely hospitality; as a measure of gratitude that the grandeur of motherhood grew large in our log cabin; and I lay in her hand this volume as a loving token of the good will she has dispensed with such unselfish prodigality.

This book has been a long time in preparation. The same quantity of copy, written by the newspaper assignment method, could have been prepared in a few days. A reminiscent mood, however, cannot be coerced, hurried or directed; like any other worth while thing it must be spontaneous and take its own course.

Intervals of weeks and months have elapsed with not a single line added to these pages; then a picture, an incident, a conversation, a newspaper story would

fit, my father owned two wagons and eight yokes of oxen and cows. Twelve of the critters were driven regularly, and the four extra "cow-power" was distributed along the wagon train wherever the exigencies of transportation required. Uncle Billy owned and rode a horse.

Male members of the party who were old enough and able to walk, in turn tramped beside the teamsters during the day and slept on the open prairie at night. If the weather threatened a tent was raised. The women and small children occupied the covered wagons, and six weeks were consumed in making the journey which now requires but a day and night.

Weather and Roads.

The weather was fine and the trip not unpleasant. At the camping places father sought to interest the residents in our early Iowa adventure. We crossed the Mississippi River at Flint Hills, now Burlington, Iowa, and declared that we had reached the promised land. Directing our course toward the northwest, we reached Fort Des Moines the latter part of October.

We found bad roads all along the route, although the rivers and sloughs were at low-water mark compared with the spring season. Many of the swamps seemed to be bottomless, which characteristic of Iowa topography has furnished the historian with a topic of perennial interest and amusement; for the highway commissioner, the paving

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awaken the sleeping past—open the closed doors and permit an intimate view and minute review of the life of half a century ago.

The material herein has been sought diligently, and gathered piecemeal through the seasons of coming and going and close companionship with my mother.

The pioneers of Iowa did not consider their life harder or their surroundings more picturesque than any passing period develops; hence their reluctance to assume an attitude which smacks of seeking commendation for following a course which was chosen as a preference and pursued from inclination.

Repetition, intervening pains or present pleasures have not enlarged the proportions of past hardships; rather have distance and discussion minimized their importance in the mind of my mother. With this predilection, it is but natural that many of the vital, the interesting, the ludicrous happenings of pioneer times may have escaped her memory.

HARRIET M. BONEBRIGHT-CLOSZ.

contractor and the good roads expert had not then begun operations upon the swamp-lands of this commonwealth.

We crossed no railroads in the state, and not a wagon bridge contributed to our comfort or safety. All streams were forded, and sloughs of dubious proportions were "doubled" through; although frequently the teams were mired in the virgin muck of the Hawkeye prairie. Log chains and pry-poles often were brought into requisition and were as much a part of the paraphernalia of emigration as the smithy's tools or the tar-bucket dangling at the rear from the wagon-reach.

When there were particularly aggravated cases of being stuck in the mud, the household goods were unloaded and carried to solid ground to lighten the pull for the oxen. For this work, slabs provided for the purpose, were placed one in front of another for the walking convenience of women and children. This method of transportation was slow and wearisome, but our party worked stoically and occasionally sang cheerful and hopeful songs.

Blazing the Trail.

Blazing trees—scalping a patch of bark which could be seen from one tree to another—was a forest method of location; and a "point of timber" was a guide-post from miles distant. When traveling over an unknown piece of prairie, a tree or "rise of land" was sighted in a direction to be taken by the company. If the distance was great a man was sent ahead as far as he could be signalled to the right or left. His location was lined up with the course already traversed, the main body came forward and the same work was repeated until the plain was crossed. Indian trails served us very little.

My father was the path-finder on our trip from Indiana. He walked ahead of the wagon-train nearly the entire distance from our old home. He viewed the prospects for advance and directed the drivers by the routes which seemed to offer the least resistance. Incidentally, he

kept the company supplied with game which was shot on his scouting trips.

Tall weeds or rushes were tied in standing bunches if the same course was to be re-traversed, and furrows often were plowed through unmarked low-grass levels. Bunches of bright colored wool tied to the rosin, artichoke or bluestem stalks were good guides across an expanse of waving meadow.

Seventy years ago Iowa prairie vegetation was vigorous and abundant. All over our present town site, especially the southeastern part, the grass was higher than a man's head. East of Superior street a man on horseback was just distinguishable making his way through the marshy flat; and both north and south of town the hazelbrush grew in rank profusion.

Pioneer traveling, even in the best of weather, was attended by discomfort and hazard, but traveling while a storm was in progress increased the peril an hundred fold.

Fords.

Fording streams was one of the prils of pioneer life. The ability of a pathfinder did not extend to improving roads. Once a trail was located it was followed across side-hills that threatened to, and with an inexperienced driver often did, upset the wagons; up and down bank-pitches that would have demoralized any motive power except the deliberate oxen; through thickets and among trees so close growing it was necessary to worm a way around them. For many years these conditions were unchanged. Occasionally a tree was cut in the line of march, but the stump remained to straddle or bump into in passing.

When a creek or river was reached the train halted. A scout "took up" the river and another "took down" it. Locating a safe ford often was a day's work. At this distance I feel justified in asserting that none of them was safe. It was desirable, if a ford could be established on a spreading riffle, although that was not always possible. The

stony bottom which characterized the riffle furnished solid footing, and an expansive surface indicated shallower water than was found in the smooth-flowing narrow runs.

An ox, and a man who was a good swimmer were chosen to try out a dubious looking ford. When dangerously deep the rider slipped off the back and clung to the tail of the ox. If neither one was drowned the ford was pronounced safe. I do not remember that we crossed a river on our trip that did not swim the "critters." Our wagon-boxes all were calked against the contingency of just such wettings. We did not use the boat-shaped wagon box as some emigrants did.

We could not always land opposite the point of starting. Often we made some distance up stream in the water to reach an accessible bank. At other times we were floated down stream by the force of the current in spite of our effort to make the desired landing. We never were overturned in the water, however. Some of the old fords still are used during low water periods. Foot-logs over small streams served the man a-foot.

We remained in Des Moines several days; replenished the provision wagon, did the party washing, were entertained with horse-racing on the main thoroughfare during the day and at a public dance in the evening. Dr. Campbell furnished music for the occasion on a fiddle which he had purchased from a frontier scout. One of our party bantered the doctor for a trade, but the articles offered in exchange were worth only about fifteen dollars and the owner wanted twenty dollars for the violin.

Des Moines Town Lots.

I clearly recollect the delegation that visited our party while we were encamped near the settlement. They offered business inducements for us to remain with them. We learned later that when Des Moines was platted, lots sold for $7.50 apiece, payments to be made annually in one dollar installments. Many Iowa towns have passed through

seasons of muddy streets. It has, however, been reported of Des Moines that through the springtime the mud in Walnut street rose and fell with the tide, and that skiffs were towed about the center of the Capitol city during high water.

The early settlers of Des Moines included the Messrs. Bryant, Scott, Sturtevant, Cassady, Kinsey, Newcomer, Rankin, Cypher, Moore, Sherman, McHenry, Dicks, Clapp, Dr. James Campbell, who later became well known in our community, Rev. Thompson Bird, Barlow Granger, later of Granger's Grove, and Alexander Turner, who soon came to Homer.

Thomas Long and family of our party, having had quite enough experience in traversing the western prairies, accepted the business proffer of the delegates and remained in Des Moines. My father, however, signified his intention of continuing the journey; after a consultation the other emigrants, except Long, decided to accompany us.

On our way northward we camped where were, afterward, the trading posts of Boonsboro and Hook's Point. We were entertained at the latter place by Major Brassfield, who, the previous season, had arrived in what now is Hamilton county.

Our First Location.

We located on the Boone river the first week in November, about six miles south of Webster City; my father selecting and staking his claim to include what now is known as Bone's mill site, S. W. 1/4 31-88-25. Along the ravine our party constructed rude log cabins, which. with pole-supports for thatchings of bark, provided comparatively comfortable shelter. Nature smiled upon us the fall of 1848, the weather was ideal and not a flake of snow fell until after New Year Day. Christmas was close at hand when the four cabins were completed and the log stables, surrounded with brush corrals, were ready as shelter for the cattle. Every one worked with a will. Some

of the men were delegated to cut a supply of hay from the already dry fields of prairie-grass; others were detailed to provide wild game-animals for food, and all participated in the work of wood chopping and grubbing.

First Birth of a Boy.

Locating on this site was a bit premature, and therefore, not a permanent home for our family; but "the coming events" which "cast their shadows before," caused us to halt the onward march at this place. One day attended by great activity of the women in camp, Little Bill Brewer was presented with a son. The child was called Bryant, and he was the first boy born in Hamilton county.

First Settler in Hamilton County.

The first settler within the present limits of Hamilton county was Minter Brassfield, of Kentucky. He came to Iowa with his family in the fall of 1847. They located at Hook's Point, and for several years their cabin home was a stopping place of interest when members of our family made trips to Des Moines. The visits of the Brassfields at our home always were anticipated with pleasure by old and young. Twenty-five years later, my own family of growing children were delighted at the prospect of a visit from the Major, and his appearance was a joyful assurance to the youngsters that tales of pioneer times were to be recounted.

Our neighbor from the south gained his title from a hunt in the hills of Kentucky. The hunting party agreed that the one who bagged the most game should receive the title of "Major." The youngest member of the company won the honor and thereafter was known as Major Brassfield.

Mrs. Brassfield, a woman of culture and refinement, was the daughter of a southern planter who owned a long retinue of slaves. From ease and opulence to the privations of pioneering was a marked change in her life, but

single-handed and without servants. Mrs. Brassfield courageously and uncomplainingly assumed the complex duties incident to household management and the rearing of a large family.

Years later Mrs. Brassfield was afflicted with eye trouble. The mother did not see the face of her youngest daughter Kate, until the child was four years old. Her sight was restored after treatment by the veteran oculist, Dr. James Campbell, of Des Moines.

The pioneer friendship initiated by Major Brassfield and Wilson Brewer has endured through four generations. His daughters and I were fast friends and his grand and great grandchildren and mine are appreciative companions.

Some time ago one of Iowa's small town papers contained a ludicrous, although convincing account of an early settler. It said: "Mr. ———— was the initial, first pioneer in this section, coming here before anyone else." The exclamation often was heard when Wilson Brewer and Major Brassfield were seen together: "There go the two first settlers." The ambiguous expression easily could be made clear, however. Brassfield was the first settler in Hamilton county, and Brewer the first settler in Webster City.

Soon after the Major's removal to Wright county, mentioned elsewhere, Mrs. Brassfield died. Several years passed and the Major married Mrs. Montgomery, mother of Alfred Montgomery, the well known Iowa painter of sheep and corn.

First Deer Killed.

My father was a party of the first part, at the Bone's mill site location, in what now would be called "easy money" game-takes; although at that time the revenue from venison and fur-bearing animals was a disappearing quantity since neither the long nor the short haul was practicable. We owned the large number of dogs which usually

is apportioned to the poor man. Three fine coon dogs. Colonel, Cap and Maje; a bulldog, Lockjaw; and two greyhounds, Typ and Tyler, both good runners as were the political leaders for whom they were named. The common curs we did not count.

One night after the family had retired, the fierce baying of the hounds indicated an attack on some unfortunate animal. Father sprang out of bed, grasped his flint-lock muzzle-loader, drew back the portiere—a quilt hung at the opening—and from the doorway shot a deer which the dogs had crippled by severing the hamstring with their teeth—a very effective hunting method of greyhounds. A crippled deer always fared badly if the bulldog accompanied the pack. His point of attack was the head or neck, and often the brisket was torn to ribbons or the nose chewed to a pulp before the hunter could reach the victim and drive off the dogs. This first specimen was a beautiful young creature that probably never had seen the habitation of man, and therefore did not recognize the arrival of a persistent and relentless enemy.

Nine Coons Caught.

One morning while the boys were tethering the cows and oxen, Typ and Tyler "picked up" a coon trail. The young men followed the dogs, with gun and axes, to a near-by hollow tree which was felled, and nine of the animals were captured and brought home alive.

Coons were so numerous that, in addition to living in the hollow trees, they made their nests in the great tufts of prairie-grass in the vicinity of what now is Pleasant Hill, and eastward around Mud Lake was a favorite haunt. The pretty creatures easily were located in their grassy homes by the dogs, and readily could be killed or captured by the hunters.

The most favorable time for coon-hunting was after nightfall or before daybreak. Finely splintered ends of shakes were lighted as torches, and served to illuminate the

HUNTING DOGS.

trail and the field of operations. For several years coonskins sold in Des Moines for less than fifty cents each. Hundreds of coons were killed by our hunters.

Royal Stag.

There were so many deer that during our early seasons fresh or cured venison was the leading article on our daily menu. A few days after our arrival the track of the first "big game" was sighted by Roll Brewer and Tom Stanley, at a point near the spring in the Church "holler" at the Silver's farm. The beast was followed northward by devious wanderings to near where the Country Club house now is located. Night overtook them and the boys decided to give up the chase until daybreak.

While talking over their plans an animal which was resting near the river, sprang forward along the steep incline only a few yards from the hunters. Tom fired; but in the fast-falling darkness his aim was untrue. Roll covered the fleeing creature with his gun, waiting for him to reach the crest of the hill against the horizon, knowing if the animal were a deer he would tarry a moment at the top to survey the surroundings. This pause of a few seconds was the sportsman's opportunity; and five minutes later the young men were removing the skin of this splendid forest creature.

The happy hunters severed the antler trophy from the skull of the animal and a choice cutlet was taken from the carcass as an evidence of good faith for the family at home. The antlers from this stag still are in the possession of our family. They have the double crown of crockets, which represent the seventh year.

Paramount Problem.

For several seasons our paramount problem was sustenance. True, the same problem exists today, but not in the naked aspect of the pioneer period. It was necessary to produce food at first hand, or by a hundred-mile haul,

ROYAL STAG.

which represented days of exposure to the elements and possible danger from wild animals or Indians.

Diligence and industry readily supplied the demand for heat and meat; so, to prepare for the next season's crop was our immediate concern. Small patches of prairie sod were plowed for spring corn and grain, and the hazel-brush plots were grubbed for buckwheat, potatoes and garden truck.

The seed-potatoes brought with us were holed-up, or down, beyond the possibility of injury from frost; our other seed supplies, obtained from Des Moines during the winter, prepared us for the spring planting. The virgin soil responded with splendid abundance; the crop of the following season was a wonderfully satisfactory one and we were relieved of the necessity for many long trips and the worry of want for the winter.

Not always were we so fortunate with crops. There were dry and wet seasons with the result of absolute failure of harvests together with the loss of seed and labor.

Marshall County Settlers.

The year after we left our old home, a party of about twenty-five followed us from Indiana. They were the William Ellsbury, John Arney, James Boyle and Henry Hauser families. They covered the same route, and were to have continued their journey to the Boone valley; but sickness of some of the party prevented, and they located in Marshall county.

The first wedding of the community took place in the fall of 1849, to which ceremony my parents were invited. The bride was Elizabeth Boyle, the bridegroom William Arney. I believe there still are members of these families residing in Marshalltown.

Our summer sojourn at Bone's mill site location, 1849, was enlivened by a detachment of soldiers, who passed our way and pitched their tents with our party. They were acting under the orders of Colonel Mason, and were the

advance inspection guard who were to recommend the location of a military base. The site was chosen on the Des Moines river; and in August of the following year Fort Clark—now Fort Dodge—was located. Major Samuel Woods, with the Sixth United States Infantry, was detailed to this fort; and scouting parties occasionally visited "Hope Hollow," our new home. The fort was maintained until 1853, when the soldiers were removed to Fort Ridgley, Minnesota.

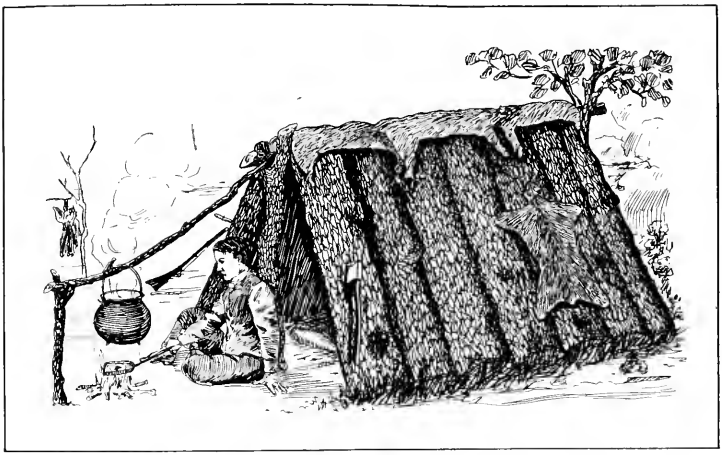
Wedding.

The visits of the military detail started the vibration of wedding bells in our midst. A young soldier, John Drought, and my cousin, Lucretia Stanley, became very good friends; and in the summer of 1850 the couple were married.

Our family by this time had moved farther north, but communication between our relatives was frequent. The wedding preparations were prolonged and impressive. There was a minister at Swede Bend, on the Des Moines river; but his services were not secured; so Reverend Thompson Bird, who doubtless wished that he could fly, was brought from Des Moines to perform the ceremony. Elder Bird made the trip on horseback. On the way he was compelled to wade through several sloughs, and when he arrived his appearance was not that of our well-groomed, present-day parson. His look of resignation, however, indicated that he was quite ready to accept the dictum of the Master that: "In heaven there is no marrying or giving in marriage." The minister was to be paid for his services with coonskins—when the hides were "ripe"—so, his prospects for remunerative returns were not alluring.

The wedding ceremony, to my youthful mind, was solemnly awe-inspiring despite the gay jollity, the even hilarious spirit manifested by the many attendants. The Marshall County contingent had been invited, as were the various recently located neighbors. There were present mem-

bers of the families of Brassfield, Mericle, Spaulding, Warner, Russell, Stall, Woolsey, Hogan, Turner and Kinnett; also a squad of soldiers from Fort Clark, who forgot for a day the rules of army discipline. The wedding-feast consisted of fish, venison, corn dodger and "garden-sass," with dessert of wild berries. The dining was done in the shade of the immense trees in the yard, and the dancing on the circular clearing around the cabin. "Ans" Brassfield fiddled furiously throughout the evening; and, as sleeping accommodations were limited, the guests "danced all night till broad daylight" and returned to their homes in the morning.



HUNTING SHELTER ON HOGSBACK, 1849.

ONE DAY'S KILLING.

CHAPTER II.

Permanent Location, and Early Enterprises.

My father and brothers, during the late fall of 1849, prospected northward. They opened a trail along the river and built a hunting-shack on the bottom-ground near Hog's-Back. This log teepee was used for shelter only on prospecting and hunting trips. It was arranged by standing the logs on end in an A-shape, chinking the cracks and covering the apex and the door openings with raw deerskins.

The location was chosen because it had been the camping-place of Indians who had cleared the underbrush and left sufficient material for constructing shelter. For many years afterward this wooded bottom was a rendezvous for numbers of roving but friendly dusty-noses, who hunted, fished or trapped along the river or big slough.

The First Cabin.

The first log cabin for the family within the present corporate limits of Webster City, was built by Wilson Brewer on the bank of Brewer's creek. It was located almost directly south of our present residence on the Bonebright homestead, about twenty-five rods south of Ohio street, and nearly midway between Superior street and the Chicago and Northwestern railway. This cabin had a dirt floor-surface, and the roof was fashioned from strips of bark.

We celebrated the holidays by moving to this location. The families of Little Bill Brewer, Bob Palmer and Uncle Billy Stanley remained at Bone's mill site.

The creek at that time furnished a full and constant supply of water for stock and laundry purposes. It did not go dry as in recent years. The drinking and cooking water we "toted" from the spring near the Chase mill site.

We remained at this place during the winter; and in the spring we erected another cabin on what now is known as the Eyer place—at the head of Millard's lane. This building spot was chosen on account of its splendid water supply. The hillside spring seems to have been inexhaustible, as it has poured forth its bounty of pure water for over seventy years.

When we were located at this place Bob Palmer joined us and occupied our vacated hut until his return to Des Moines in 1851. The structure afterward was used for a stable.

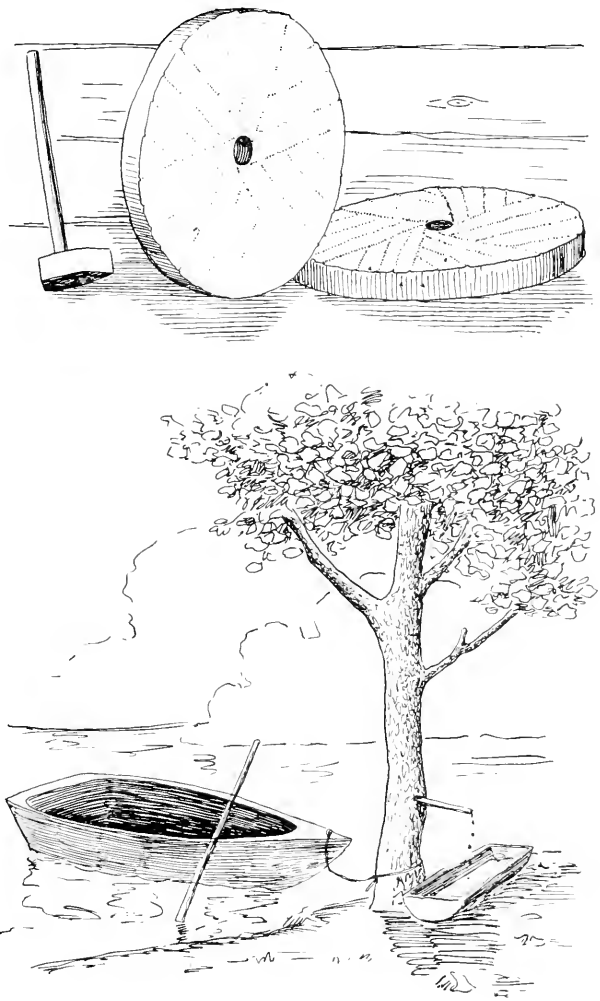
First Garden Raised.

The plowing for garden truck, buckwheat and Indian corn was done by Jack Brewer; but because of the extreme toughness of the prairie-sod, patches of underbrush were cleared for the planting. Thorough grubbing and removal of brush roots usually prepared a very fair seed-bed and a very rich one, with less labor—at least for the oxen. It has been declared, perhaps facetiously, that a yoke of oxen could have been hitched to an end of a prairie-sod turned by the plow, and a strip twenty rods long snaked from the field without breaking it in two.

Our patch of garden truck was raised during the summer of 1850, on the east side of the river opposite the Chase mill site. Log canoes were used to facilitate the work of carrying produce.

Log Canoe.

The fashioning of log canoes required considerable time and some degree of skill. A perfectly straight, or a long-curved smooth section of log was chosen. The bark was peeled and the ends shaped to the curved point desired. The upper surface of the log was slabbed off and the cavity outlined by adzing and chipping. The space thus formed was filled with live coals and the wood allowed to char.



BOULDER MILL-BURRS.
LOG CANOE.

The burning process rendered the chopping and adzing much easier although several burnings were necessary to complete the canoe. Care was required to prevent an over-charring which would have rendered the craft unseaworthy.

Log canoe transportation seemed to inspire no fear in the mind of the manipulator of pole or paddle, no matter what the condition of weather or quantity of water flowing.

Our location now seemed to be satisfactory and father "took up" the land which includes our present home, the Chase mill site, the Stearns farm, the Swanson stone quarry, and extended to the river on the northern boundary of our present city. From this parcel original Newcastle was platted.

The First Grist Mill.

Our first grist mill, as with most pioneers, was the coffee-grinder, supplemented by the "grater" for soft corn. Instead of athletics or fancy-work the young people occupied the time by grinding the corn for the next baking of dodger. When company was present, some member of the family continuously manipulated the coffee-mill; and frequently the frugal housewife who came to visit brought along an apron full of corn to grind for her own use. For many years corn-dodger was the staff of life. White wheat flour could be procured in but small quantities which was consumed only on state occasions. The coffee-mill was not a satisfactory machine for grinding the wheat berry, as the cogs required too frequent clearing.

Corn-Cracker Burrs and Mill.

A log corn-cracker mill was built on the Chase mill site during the summer of 1850. For this mill, the burrs of flint-stone were dressed and put in place by Jack Brewer. The water-wheel and gearing were homemade and cumbersome; and if the river were low, which rarely befell, the

burrs were turned by hand. This primitive process was far from satisfactory, for much of the coarse mass which passed between the stones required regrinding in the coffee-mill before it could be made into mush or pone.

For several years this log mill was used as a general repair shop and blacksmithing center with Nate Stanley as assistant for anyone who needed work done. Ox-shoeing was necessary for activities on the ice, or for sleety weather. The steel shoes for oxen were made in two pieces instead of one, as for horses. There were, of course, two toe-calks for each shoe. It was somewhat difficult to fashion ox-shoes with the front calks at exactly an efficient angle.

Mill-Dam, Fish-Trap.

A dam of logs, brush and stones was extended across the river from the mill site, while the water was at its lowest in the summer. A runway was arranged in the dam and a fish-trap with a capacity of several barrels was placed at this lowered opening in the evening; in the morning it was full of fish. The trap was made from hickory-withes fastened with wooden pins and buckskin thongs. It resembled, somewhat, the large willow crates used for bulky meschandise. The openings were large enough to permit the escape of small fish.

We selected for food no kinds except pike and bass, and these in sizes which yielded the highest return when dressed. Other specimens were returned to their natural element. Fish were speared through openings in the ice during the winter. They were dressed at once and hung up to freeze. Some of them were of immense size; if strung on saplings resting on the men's shoulders, their tails swept the ground. When hung in the smoke-house they extended from the ridge-pole to the solid clay-packed floor. Side pieces of hog-meat or fish were called flitches, and when fish was needed for cooking sections of the body were chopped off and immersed in water to thaw. Late in

the spring a supply of fish was salted and smoked to carry us through the dog-days.

I have read many fantastic fish stories. I have heard of the pioneer, the wheels of whose wagon were blocked in mid-river by fish and eels seeking to be captured; but he did not belong to our family. I am sure, however, that many of the fish which were rejected by us and returned to the river, would make our modern minnow-takers exclaim with envy that: "Izaak Walton's day is not our day."

Seeking Settlers.

Immediately after permanently establishing ourselves father notified his friends in the East, and at Davenport and Burlington, Iowa, and the other Mississippi river towns where he had enlisted workers to secure settlers for this part of the country. Several families that had followed us in 1849 and were headed for the Boone valley settlement, found us at our winter quarters at Bone's mill site, so they located at Homer. Among them were Jacob Mericle, his brother and sons, Dan Spaulding and son and several Swedish families.

The following year, 1850, a similar situation arose; although we then were permanently located at Newcastle, the families of Orrin Warner, William Russell, John Stall, Ross Dalbey, Tom Hogan, Alex Turner and son Rob, after an inspection tour, decided that in case of Indian trouble it would be easier to procure help by way of the Des Moines river from Fort Dodge than from across the country, so they cast their fortunes with Woolsey, the Bells and the small number of earlier settlers who formed the nucleus of Homer. Dalbey and Turner soon came to Newcastle, however.

Sam Schultz, early in 1850, followed our trail and became one of our helpers. His cabin was erected across the river from the Chase mill site. The family of six boys

and five girls was a welcome acquisition. We needed help and neighbors, and the Schultzes proved their worth in many ways.

First Plowing for Crops.

Soon after his arrival Sam Schultz was hired by father to plow ground on what was later the Bill Funk farm. The work was done in patches where the least clearing was required. Quite extensive preparations were made for the crops we expected to raise in 1851; but the season was too wet for growing them.

My brothers Jack and Roll Brewer split rails to fence the home farm during the winter of 1850 and 1851. The first "worm" was placed by the men folk before the spring thawing; and my mother, with my assistance, completed its construction.

Why a fence was deemed necessary I do not know, for our pigs roamed through the woods at will and grew fat on the abundance of mast. Our locality did not become famous as developing the razor-back or prairie-rooter. The oxen were kept busy with the work of improvement, so the crop was not in danger of being destroyed by four-footed depredation.

Bird Pests.

Had it been possible to provide protection from above instead of around a field, the work might have been effective. When general cropping began the blackbird and wild pigeon pest was a serious one. Before the sun suffused the eastern horizon birds young and old, a million strong, would settle like a cyclone cloud upon the fields. From the time the tender leaves came forth and from the stage of roasting ears or heading grain, to the final husking, cradling and flailing, it was necessary for someone to patrol the fields and disturb the depredators by shooting into their midst with a rifle. The shotgun was not then in use and

gun-firing seemed a slow, wasteful and ineffectual attempt at conservation.

Wild geese, sand-hill cranes, wild turkeys and prairie chickens also were ambitious to assist the settlers in harvesting their remnants of crops; but they were more timorous than the smaller, more active birds. Scare-crows, such as are seen today, would have furnished only a convenient resting place for the over-filled pigeon or blackbird. Nothing less than the twentieth century gatling gun could have cleared fields of the many beautiful, but greedy, specimens of ornithology.

Deer Fields.

When prospectors came to look the country over, the possibilities of game sport were shown off very easily. Along the eastern border of Millard's lane, where the grass grew tall and heavy, and extending to the skirting of timber along the river, was a rendezvous and browsing place for deer.

Two or three of the boys would circle out, several rods apart and from the river make a rounding-up toward the west. A dozen, perhaps a greater number of deer would canter past our cabin within easy shooting range of father and the waiting prospector. To be able to shoot big game from one's dooryard was quite an inducement for an easterner to locate with us.

Rail fences offered but indifferent obstacles at these rounding-up exhibitions, except to small deer. The half-grown and full-grown animals cleared the fences without apparent effort.

First Cabin on the Town Site.

The first cabin, located near our present home, was not of course, on the town site as later platted. The first cabin on the original town plat of Newcastle was built in the fall of 1851, by Wilson Brewer, for his sister, Nancy Brewer-Stanley. When the town was laid out the cabin was found

to be standing directly in First street just east of Superior street near the present city market. It later was torn down and re-erected as a stable.

First Day-School, First Sunday-School and Preaching Services.

The first day-school and Sunday-school sessions and the first regular preaching services were held in the cabin of Nancy Stanley. Rev. Thompson Bird, of Des Moines, favored us with several sermons after the Stanley-Drought wedding. On his occasional trips he stopped at our house and, in good weather, preached under the spreading branches of the trees in the dooryard. Mrs. Wheeler was our day-school teacher, although the work was unusual for a woman at that time. I was not a constant attendant, but I remember Mrs. Wheeler as a sweet-faced, pleasant-voiced woman.

The First Store-Keeper.

The William Dickinson family arrived in the spring of 1851 and located south of town on the Arth Millard place. They brought with them a supply of drygoods; my first calico dress, red with white dots, was purchased from them. This family conducted a regular supply-station for several years and made frequent trips to Des Moines and Dubuque in the interest of the busy settlers.

John Maine came with the Dickinson family. Maine located on the north hill on what now is known as the Grafunder farm. Pieces of prairie that were not too wet were prepared for planting, but the seed was not sown.

The arrivals during the year included the families of Jewett, Jacks, Bonnett, Wheeler, Rhodes, Liesman, Brock, Brainard, Snyder, Crooks, Mills, Lyon, Tollman, Pierce, Johnson, Elder and Reverend Jamie Woods. The new arrivals who did not locate at Newcastle, distributed themselves through the country to the west and southwest. My

father and brothers assisted in preparing shelter for the early Newcastle arrivals, as well as in erecting the later trading-places and taverns.

Extensive Prairie Breaking.

Father, in the fall of 1851, hired Isaac Lyon, who arrived a year before his brother Peter, to break the prairie to the south and southwest of our cabin. The number one, prairie-upland hay was burned off and Uncle Ike, with five yoke of oxen and the assistance of his son Arth, turned over the largest acreage that then had been plowed in this section of the country.

Beginning at the north opening into Millard's lane and extending along its western boundary represents the location where the regular breaking-plow, with its wooden mold-board and primitive motive power, did the first work. The next season, however, father secured the services of Jotham Lyon as breaker, and the whole area of our present city was broken. Thereafter much of the produce for immediate needs was raised. The long trips to market were reduced in their frequency, such trips being necessary only to dispose of hides, furs and baskets, or to buy ammunition and incidental household luxuries.

Other Early Arrivals.

Soon after Sam Schultz arrived, John Butler came and chose his claim north of town. On this trip he stayed but a short time and returned to his former home to be married. Tom Mills squatted a few miles southwest of our settlement. Nathan Stanley and John Drought came up from Bone's mill site. Rube Bennett on his first trip, and Joe Peabody also joined us and later in the fall of 1850 Jim Jenkins' cabin was built east of the Dubuque street bridge at the crest of the hill.

The location, although chosen by him, was declared to be the coldest spot in christendom in winter but the fairest and finest in summer. After the death of Jenkins, Sr., by

freezing, and the fatal accident to the son Philip, recorded elsewhere, the remaining members of the family returned to the East. Mrs. Jenkins regarded the cabin with superstitious awe and requested that it be burned. After their departure the structure was filled and banked with inflammable material and fired.

Our family was fortunate in having the minimum of fire losses. We lost nothing except isolated sheds, due to prairie fires, and an occasional necessary burning because of the over-sociability of skunks.

Cabins often were torn down and re-erected in different locations, either for family use or for the stabling of stock. Many early settlers were housed together. There were many more families than cabins.

First Wheat Raising.

Our first wheat crop was raised on the Frank Huddleston farm. It was cut with a cradle and the uneven bunches were bound and shocked. Later in the season the bundles were hauled in, Indian fashion, on a large travy or travail. This contraption was made with a set of poles, two of which extended beyond the others and the upper ends were lashed to an ox, the lower ends dragged on the ground. Two feet from the lower ends the poles were laced together criss-cross, with rawhide or basswood bark. The load was placed on this network and snaked home.

The flailed grain was hauled to a mill beyond Des Moines for grinding. The product was whole wheat meal, for the miller did not then separate bran, shorts or white flour. One quarter of the grist was retained by the grinder as toll. There was a grist-mill near the junction of the Des Moines and Boone rivers which began operations soon after our crop was disposed of. It was a primitive affair. The grinding-burrs had been dressed from granite boulers; but Billy Bruce did a rushing business in pulverizing buckwheat and corn; for by that time the settlers were arriving in greater numbers.

Early in 1852 Zeb Perkins, Amos Brewer, Peter Lyon, Jim Phipps, Sam Judy and others came to our town; and a little later in the season our numbers were increased by the arrival of the Turnham, Grosclose, Russell, Doty, Frakes, Bellville, Barkus, Fall, Downing and Prime families.

Further down the Boone and along the Des Moines river were the families of Ike Hook, Jesse Goodrich, Nels Omstead, Jim Brock, Tom Williams, John Whaley, Ben Bell, Wash Neese, George Andrews, Sam Eslick, Dave Carroll, William Berkley and others. Quite a number passed the Homer, Fort Dodge, Newcastle triangle and located in Wright county.

John Butler returned to us during the fall of 1852. With his five yokes of oxen he broke, for himself, parcels of land on the north of Newcastle. He also helped many of the settlers in clearing their wooded claims. In the log-rolling or stump-pulling contests which created great interest, Butler and his oxen usually secured the honors.

The cabin of Butler was barely completed when a brush of wind lifted the roof and half buried it in the field. As he was north of the river, the horseshoe-bend protection did not serve him.

CHAPTER III.

Cabin Building, and Beds.

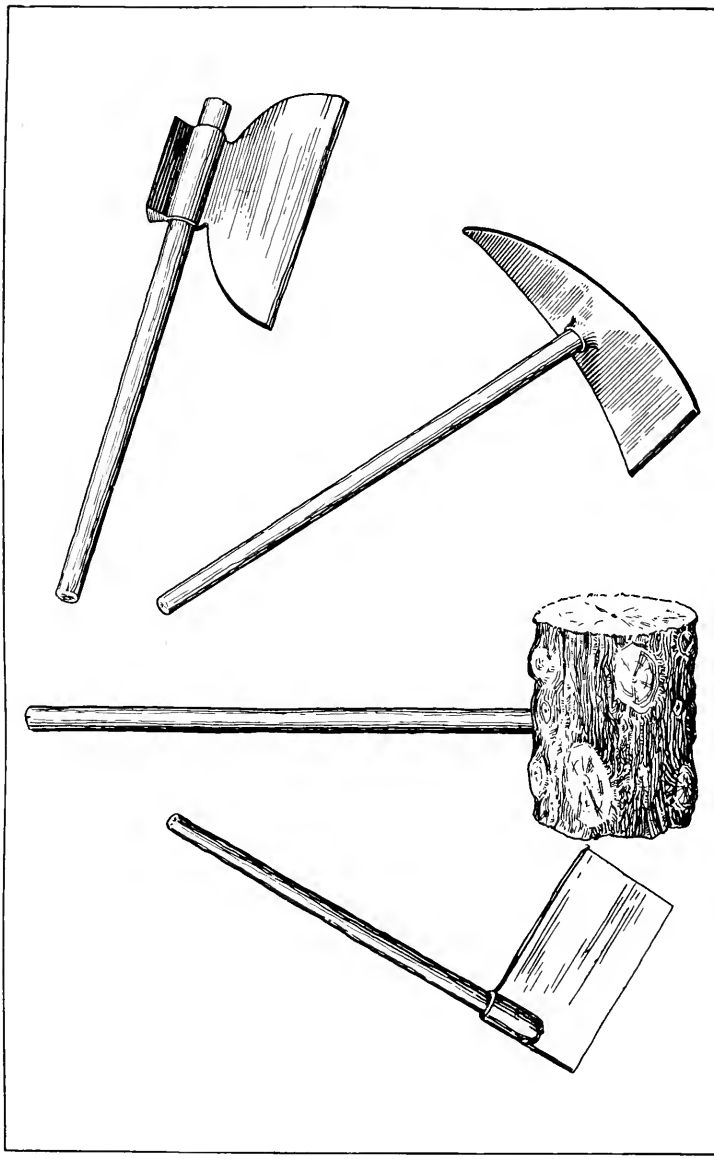
Jack Brewer was esteemed an expert in the work of cabin construction. Uniformly shaped logs were selected if possible and they were laid out on the ground in the order to be raised. The chopping of notches at the ends of the logs to saddle or fit their fellows was called "taking up the corners." The upper timbers often projected to some length and were used for hanging household and field implements, stringing up an animal carcass or surface-drying a hide.

A bullet attached to the end of a string suspended from each timber as it was raised furnished the method of evening or plumbing. The shadow of a tree at noon was the rule for starting square with the world. Several tiers of logs were laid, and when building in winter, a fire was made at one end of the space to thaw the dirt, which mixed with water, supplied mortar to chink the cabin cracks. The excavation made the floor surface lower at one end than at the other, say, about a foot or a foot and a half ledge marked off two-thirds of the floor-area.

The logs were rolled up on skids with hand spikes—long slender poles—to a point as high as the men could reach; then with forked sticks they were lifted into place with the aid of steadying guide-ropes in the hands of men on the top tier. Before the gables were shaped to the proper slant, the hewn beams for rafters were placed at intervals across the log framework.

Roofing.

Two poles with top forks were set in the ground so the crotches corresponded to the gable peaks; in these the



FROW. GNARLY WOOD MAUL. GRUBBING HOE. BROAD-AX.

ridge-pole was laid. Two parallel cross-center stays supported the heavy shake roof. Shakes were pieces of oak boards from four to six feet in length, according to the size of the hut. They were rived from a hewn log with a frow—a large cleaving knife with the handle set at right angles with the blade. The frow was pounded into the log with a small maul or mallet and a section of wood about an inch thick, six or eight inches wide and the desired length was split off. The shakes overlapped like ordinary shingles. The lower ends often were loosely arranged so they might be pushed aside in fair weather for light and ventilation. Heavy poles were placed on top of the roof where the shakes lapped; these weights were kept at the proper distance apart by roof-knees—notched logs fitted and fastened at right angles between the binding or weight poles and along the gable edges of the roof.

Grass thatching was not used by us. The long, rank hay would have served the purpose admirably, but the rudely constructed chimneys made thatched buildings an extra hazardous fire risk. We did not carpet the floor with hay for the same reason. The pole skeletons for stock stables, however, not only were covered with grass but the splendid wild blue-stem was stacked all around the shelters except at the door-openings. Cattle could help themselves to the hay-ration, and they usually ate their way through the stacking at various points during the winter.

Doors.

The openings for cabin doors and windows were sawed out after the logs were laid. The free ends were wedged up plumb with the corners and the logs forming the top casings for these openings then were put in place. Two windows, two feet square was a luxury; one window was the general rule, and it was covered with slabs during the winter. I have seen many a cabin without a single window and but one door. A good many cabins, however, had two doors directly opposite each other. Occasionally an ox

was hitched to a back-log, the cut dragged into the cabin at one door, the chain loosed and the critter driven out through the other opening. Children shinned through the windows as often as they ran in or out of the door.

The two side-casings for a door were scaled to the desired size and thickness from slabs, and were fastened to the log-ends. There were no extra top or bottom frame-pieces. The material for doors was split from clear, straight-grained logs and smoothed with a foot-adz. A notch about five inches square was cut from the bottom corner of the door-board for the entrance and exit of cats. Some of the large log-sections furnished one-panel doors. A solid black walnut one-panel door is in our possession at this time.

A man usually had to stoop in order to pass through a door opening, but the lack of height made it easy to reach the rifle which rested in the forks of a couple of cut saplings pinned to the log-casing.

Doors were hung on hickory hinges which were bolted with wooden pegs. A less durable hinge, one certain to sag or wear in two, was made from buckskin or leather from an old boot leg. Doors opened inward and fastened on the inside. No latch, lock, knob or handle was visible from the outside. The cross-piece of the hickory latch was lifted from its notch by pulling the rawhide string attached to it which hung on the outer surface through a hole a few inches above the latch. This string could be drawn inside in case of danger, and the door further secured with a cross-bar set into casing-notches.

Puncheon Floor.

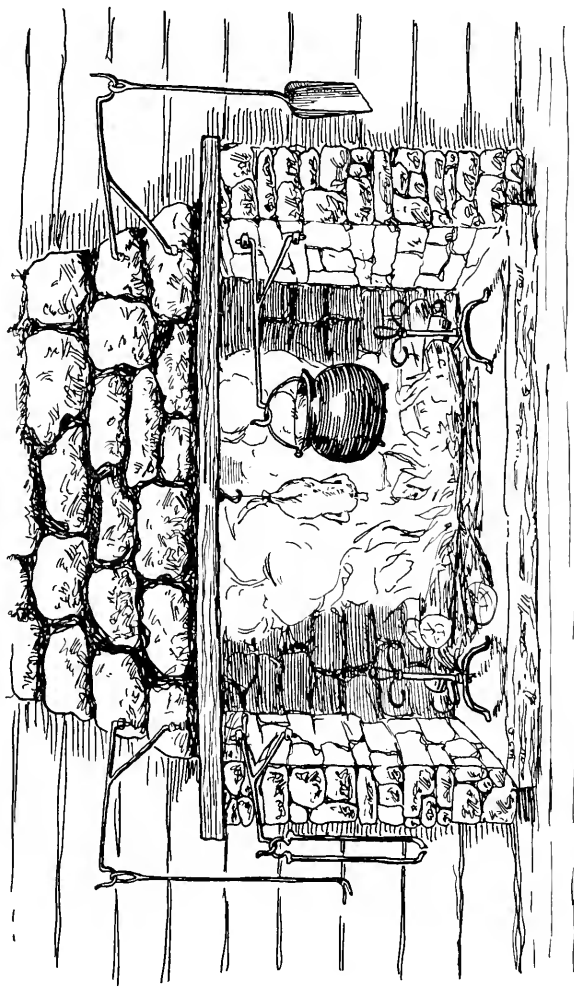
The cabin with a puncheon floor was thought to be quite well finished; for all early structures were unprovided with slab floors. The dirt for floor-surfacing was well tramped —dampened if necessary—and beaten with a maul until smooth and solid. If clay was available, so much the better

for the comfort of the housewife, as clay packed evenly and became almost impervious to water.

Puncheon floors were prepared by splitting the outside slabs from the surface of logs, hewing the flat side as smooth as possible with the broad-ax and an adz. The puncheon was put into place on the ground with the rounding side downward. They soon settled into the soft soil and made a solid walking surface; if however, a piece of floor-log settled unevenly and persisted in rocking when stepped upon, it was removed and rebedded.

The attic floor-boards were not fastened to the ceiling rafters, and they soon became warped and uneven. Many loft floors were extensive enough only to place the bed ticks and furnish a walk-way from the ladder to the beds. The open condition of the ceiling made it easy to place things for drying and seasoning; besides, the arrangement prevented the garret sleepers from freezing to death in winter or roasting to death in summer. The ladder leading to the loft was made from a section of puncheon with cleats fastened to the flat surface about eighteen inches apart. One end of the slab rested on the lower floor and the other extended, almost perpendicularly, into the opening in the attic floor.

Our first cabin at Newcastle only had sufficient floored space upon which to set the beds, loom, spinning wheels and other bulky belongings. There was an eighteen inch jump-off from this puncheon floor to the earthen surface where the daily work was done. This ledge was utilized to sit upon, and therefore, fewer stools were necessary. We thought we were quite comfortably domiciled when we built on the Eyer place, the hewed, double log cabin with a lean-to. This cabin furnished ample room for our family and others; and for many years it was the community center of entertainment. Outhouse accommodations were the thick brush or a couple of fallen tree-trunks; one for men, one for women.



THE FIREPLACE OF THE '50'S.

Fireplace.

The fireplace was a five-foot opening at one end of the cabin. The greater the fire capacity the more wood could be burned; and, therefore, the ground sooner would be cleared for planting. The first chimneys were built with sticks daubed with mud; but on account of fire danger we soon began to use stones. The front surface of the fireplace was set a foot or so into the room, and the depth—the receptacle for fire—was extended backward two feet and outside of the cabin wall. The mantel shelf took shape at about five feet high, and the chimney wall then was narrowed and shaped to the regular size. The randle, or back-bar, was arranged below and back of the shelf and on it were the trammels—hooks for hanging kettles. On this bar strips of venison were seared at every killing.

Flint-sparking was the early method of ignition. The kindling was arranged with a bunch of tinder—usually tow—beneath and in front of it, and a bit of powder sprinkled thereon. The flint was struck sharply with a hard substance, say the steel on the handle of a bowie-knife, and the sparks resulting from the concussion lighted the powder. Our care, however, was to obviate the necessity for starting a fresh fire every day, so we carefully covered the coals with ashes to prevent their entire extinction. Then rekindling easily could be done from the embers. Occasionally it was necessary to fire a dampened gun-wad into inflammable material to start a fire.

One-Legged Bedstead.

The pioneer wall-bedstead had but one leg; and it was put in place by the regular cabin builders. Very often two beds had but one leg—if the width of the cabin was twelve feet. I have seen two beds and several wall-bunks resting on one strong sapling leg-support. One end of the pole foot-rail and, likewise, an end of the side-rail was fastened to the single bed-leg, and the other ends were fitted into an auger-hole in the log wall. If bunks were to be

arranged, a high, stout leg-timber was utilized. Holes were bored one above another, two or three feet apart. The foot and side-rails for each bunk then were arranged as already described.

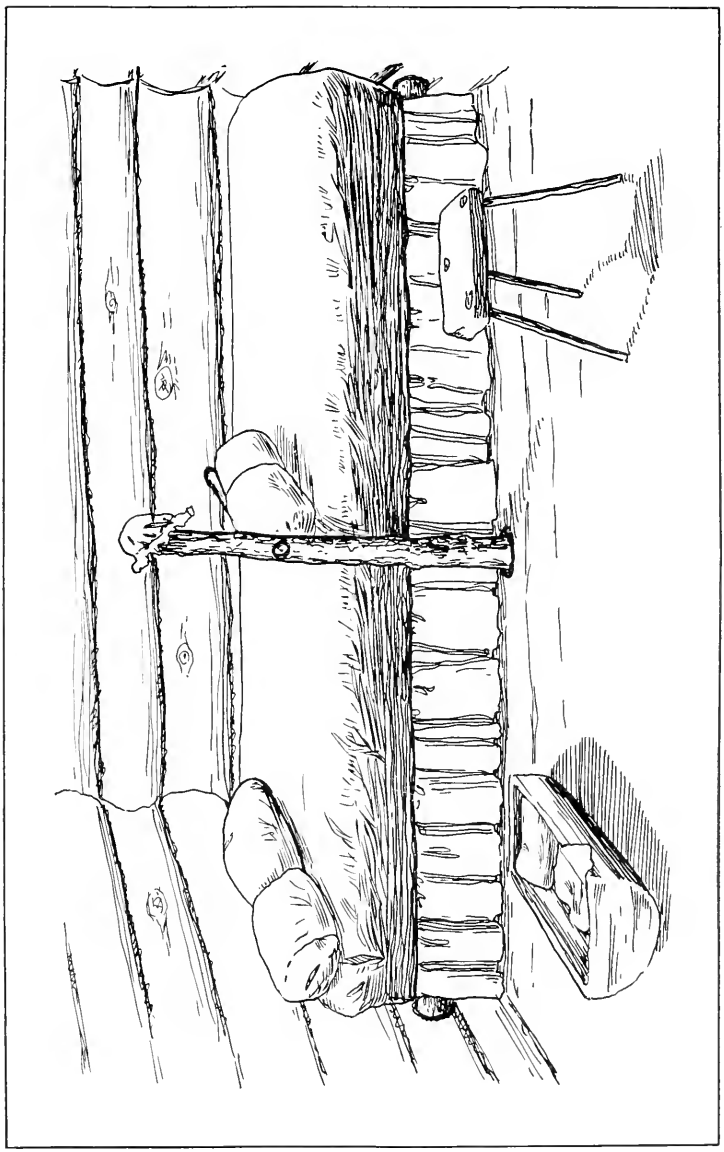
Ends of shake-slats were stuck into the log-crevices and the other ends rested on the side-rail. It often happened, when the burden was too heavy, the slats settled and slipped from the wall cracks and precipitated the occupants of the bed to the floor. If cord were used instead of slats, saplings were fastened to the wall and the rope cris-crossed from them according to the usual method. Sometimes a linen blanket or quilt was fastened to the logs and to the side-rail and bed end. This did away with the slipping slats, but the sag to the center was much greater than with the cord-woven support.

A quilt tied at the four corners with ropes depending from the rafters made a comfortable nest for a child. The trundle-bed was made small enough to slide under the bedstead during the day. The log cradle usually occupied the hearth.

A four-legged bedstead also was made. While it could be shifted about, it could not be taken apart. When a family moved these bedsteads remained for the next comer. With the advent of the four-poster and its yards of cordage, convenience seemed to have attained its limit and luxury its climax. There still is in the possession of our family a four-post, cord bedstead that is over one hundred years old.

When dances were on the program the portable bedstead, loom, table, spinning-wheels, provision barrels, etc., were moved outside; and wooden chunks and slabs were arranged along the log walls for seats.

Jack Brewer assisted in all the work of cabin building until his death in February, 1857. The broad-ax so well used by him in the early work in Newcastle still is in the possession of his son, Andrew Brewer. The implement



LOG CRADLE. ONE-LEGGED BED.

was kept carefully by the maternal grandfather, Patrick Frakes, and given to Andrew on his twenty-first birthday. Our own family broad-ax is a rusty relic of the past, but is preserved by my son, Frank Bonebright.

CHAPTER IV.

Illumination, Cabin Conditions.

Our first provision for lighting was a receptacle—usually a saucer—filled with grease. A twisted rag wick rested against the ironstone edge, and when charred with the flame it was snuffed with shears or the fingers. Sometimes two or three wicks were placed in one dish to increase the lighting surface. We called them the Betty light, although a long way from the original.

The button light was prepared by wrapping an end of the wicking around a button, securing it with thread, and loosely winding the short length of wick so it would stand erect. The button end was placed in the dish, and the wick stood above the grease surface for lighting.

Other luminaries were prepared with turnips and beets as tallow receptacles. One-third of the white or red globe was cut away and the center flesh scraped out. Three sticks were stuck into the bottom surface for legs. A wick was tied loosely to a supporting upright stick which was thrust into the bottom flesh at the center of the beet or turnip cavity. The receptacle was kept well filled with lard or tallow—sometimes with goose grease or venison fat. Two generations ago mother did much of the family sewing beside the feeble ray of this type of light.

Tallow Dip.

A homemade method of candle making was to prepare a wick and dip it into cooling tallow, lift out and allow the grease to congeal on the string. Repeat the process until the desired size of candle was secured. They were made more symmetrical by lightly rolling under the palm on a smooth surface, while the grease was hardening. This

product was called the tallow-dip. Tallow-dips were more easily broken than the molded candles, but they were an improvement on the open grease-dish methods.

Candle Molds.

Our first device for molding held but two candles. We brought with us from Indiana a goodly supply of tallow. When the material was exhausted and we could not replenish our stock from Des Moines, we had recourse to mutton-tallow or venison-fat mixed with beeswax; the latter furnished the texture for solidity. The illumination from this mixture was not so brilliant, but the candles possessed the merit of lasting longer than our full-strength tallow cylindricals.

We procured a set of molds, within a year or two, with a capacity of twelve candles. The possession of these molds satisfied us and we wished for no greater convenience and hoped for no improvement in the method of candle making. The utensils were in almost constant use either in our own family or among the neighbors.

Candle-molds were metal tubes about a foot in length, fastened together in groups of from two to twelve tubes. These receptacles when standing ready to fill were a trifle larger at the top than at the bottom. An inch from the tapering end there was a conical shaping of the tube which terminated in a small opening at the bottom of the cylinder. The tapering cone-shaped lower end was the top of the candle when finished.

The candle-wicking was twisted and doubled and the cut ends threaded through the hole in the bottom of each tube. Where the wick doubled a wire was thrust through the loop and rested on the upper surface of the molds. The wicks then were pulled taut through each tube and a knot tied close to the metal; this knot closed the small hole at the cone-shaped end, and prevented loss of the melted tallow when the receptacles were filled. After filling the molds with grease they were set aside to cool and harden.

SAUCER LIGHT.
CANDLE MOULDS.

TALLOW DIP.

SAUCER LIGHT.
TURNIP LIGHT.

The finished product usually could be removed from the frames without difficulty, by first clipping the wicking-knot at the conical end, and gently lifting on the wire at the top of the cylinders; if the contents adhered, the molds were passed through the flame at the fireplace which at once released them.

Not many candles were molded at one time; for if stored for future use the mice made havoc with the supply. They also ate the raw candle-material, but in that case our work and time were not wasted.

Cabin Cleanliness.

There is a wide difference between the present means of contributing to conventional comfort and the methods of pioneer existence under the stress of necessity; nevertheless, large numbers of early settlers lived to an advanced age and health rules, daily, were "honored in the breach instead of the observance."

Cabin conditions, during the early years, would have caused despair in the mind of a sanitary commissioner. A bath tub was unheard of, and the natural natatorium—the river—served only during the summer season.

Cooking, eating, sleeping, washing, dressing, nursing the sick, laying out the dead—these things all were accomplished in the one-room cabin.

Field workers seemed to seek the accumulation of mud or clay to shake from their boots in the house. The wet and reeking socks or jeans "britches" were given preference to the coffee-pot and meat-skillet on the hearth, while the unfortunate owner of the apparel was sentenced to bed during the drying process.

Unfavorable weather made game-dressing and fur-preparation a necessary but sanguinary and odorous occupation at the fireside.

Flies.

Two generations ago door-screens were unknown in this neck-o' the woods. The common house fly and the big

"blue-bottle" doubtless often left the cabin in disgust and sought the tanning-tub, stable-yard or the accumulation of fish-refuse as a respite from in-door activities. The swarms, however, at meal time settled upon the victuals with such voracity that one of the family was kept busy with a "shooer," not to protect food from the pests, but to prevent the diners from devouring flies. These now declared germ-distributors at night roosted contentedly on the overhead festoons of drying pumpkin; and they began their buzzing morning song before the nocturnal activities of the mosquito and other vermin had ceased.

Sleeping Ventilation.

The system of ventilation, in winter, was through the fireplace; but with a sleeping contingent of from ten to twenty, the odor of bodily emanations and the varied but unclassified assortment of other smells must have taxed even its wide capacity.

The now jocular expression: "two in a bed and three in the middle," was no joke then. The assignments were made according to size. Two grown-ups and one child at the head, and two half-grown children at the foot of the bed; while three or four in the trundle bed was the rule instead of the exception. Many a night travelers have slept soundly rolled in a quilt on the floor of the cabin, and Indian transients slept before the fire wrapped in their blankets.

All extra floor-space, during severe weather, often was piled with game carcasses awaiting preparation for market; and not infrequently the newly dropped calves and lambs occupied a place on the warm hearth and expressed their gratitude by plaintively bleating or calling "maa." It should be recorded, however, that the dogs slept out of doors in the warm corner by the stone chimney; although they had the habit of sneaking into the house at every opportunity and disposing themselves under the bed or table.

Under-the-bed space, ordinarily, was taken up with household plunder or the trundle-bed, which the linen bed-curtains discreetly screened from view.

The present rules for preventing the contamination of milk supplies were inoperative in the "airly" days. The crocks of lacteal fluid sat jauntily on the salt-fish or sauerkraut barrels and these receptacles were covered with table-cloths, mercifully, to prevent the drowning of rodents. While this method may have saved the mice it shortened our supply of milk, as morning often disclosed the adhesive qualities of butter-fat by the perfect attachment of cream to the table-cloth.

Mice.

There were so many mice and they courted the company of the family so persistently, they made a playground of the benches, beds and tables at night. They scurried about the floor and cupboards in the daytime; and although slaughtered by the score, like a company of war-zealous soldiers, there was no noticeable diminution of numbers, for recruits filled the ranks before the victims could be thrown into the fire.

The wool-sack and the meal-sack were rivals for the attentions of the rodents. The twin instincts of nature, self-preservation and reproduction, strove for precedence. When these sacks of supplies were placed on chairs or barrels, or suspended from the rafters, it was not with the idea that we hoped for immunity from the mice, but it was a simple question of the smaller number of marauders which were agile and persistent enough to secure the prize.

The mice of our early acquaintance were the common white-bellied field breed, and they were larger specimens than the house-mouse of today; if one were to express an unprejudiced opinion it would be that they were beautiful and cunning little creatures. Rats, fortunately for us and the household supplies, did not appear until some advance of settlement.

The stories of women mounting chairs and tables to escape from mice must have originated since pioneer times. Had we resorted to such methods we would have occupied a permanent place on top of the furniture; no work would have been done and even in such an elevated position we could not have escaped the presence or attentions of the active little pests.

Mosquitoes.

Mosquitoes, like mice, were busy both day and night. The humming of swarms of mosquitoes sounded like the approach of a coming storm; and indeed, there was a storm of protest in preparation for defense. All day long the smudge-pot industriously was supplied with material. It was moved about the house as the wind changed or our working positions shifted. Everything about the cabin acquired a smoky look and smell. This condition, notwithstanding, did not destroy the mosquitoes, but it did discourage their activities somewhat. Without smoke protection clouds of mosquitoes fairly darkened the atmosphere; and in going about the premises bunches of leafy hazel-brush were threshed about the face or bare legs to lessen the painful inflictions of the blood-thirsty insects.

There were mosquitoes of immense size which we called "gal-nappers." When a girl was persistently sought by the gal-nappers she was said to be old enough to accept the attentions of the opposite sex; if already engaged she was listed for matrimony very soon.

Bed Bugs.

The historian usually is discreetly silent regarding the courteously named "crimson-rambler;" but the bed bug is so cosmopolitan in his wanderings, so insistent in activities and insatiable in appetite, that he compelled a painful and luridly wordy recognition from the pioneers.

One would have been considered mildly insane had he

declared that rodents, winged insects or vermin could be exterminated or excluded from the house; indeed, until the domiciles were improved it would have been impossible. Our efforts were directed merely toward "reasonable restraint," and these pests gained an unreasonable monopoly in many households on account of the relaxed vigilance of the women-folk.

Wash Basins.

Our wash dishes were the usual tin milk-pan shapes. Several soldered sections formed the upright side-circle. The bottom also was soldered to the rim. After a short time in use they leaked at every joint and age opened the rusty seams at various intermediate points.

Tufts of yarn were pulled into the holes to stop the leaks until there was not enough solid material to support the sections or bottom. Large gourds, however, made good substitutes for the tin wash-basins.

A post was set in the ground beside the rain barrel—later beside the well—and a short, flat-surfaced slab nailed to the top for the wash-pan and soap-gourd. Workers, on the way home, often washed their faces and hands at the spring or creek.

A hurrying bunch of boys sometimes took turns pouring water on the hands and heads of one another. This method saved some wear on the pan, but it maintained a mud-puddle in the dooryard. Visiting young women usually offered their services for the water-pouring work, and of course, several boys would try to catch the same stream at once. The pushing and pulling usually culminated in promiscuous water throwing which ended only when the supply of water was exhausted.

When there was a working-bee, the tub was filled with water and the whole force performed their ablutions at the same fount, and two or three at a time used the long tow-towel. The wooden-stave tub was a perennial example

of constancy, for the hoops were always loose and it leaked at the stave openings.

A few families used crocks instead of wash-basins. They were more serviceable and sanitary, but the thought of a milk-crock or the dough-bowl as a toilet accessory was not pleasing and they did not grow in favor.

When regular wash-pans were offered on the market, they were so small that by the time a couple of splashes of water were made on the face and the head stuck into the receptacle for a more thorough wetting the pan was empty. More water was necessary unless the half-washed candidate removed the rest of the dirt with the towel. Late in the season or until it was too cold to leave water in the barrels, the boys, before breakfast, broke the ice and washed in the freezing water. Some of them preferred rubbing the hands and face briskly with snow. The practice "waked-up" the washer and seemed to satisfy the mentor of cleanliness.

The Toilet.

Small children were combed by the older ones, and the older ones by mam—first with the "reddin-comb" then with the fine-tooth. The hair was worn long and was very thick. The combing was not done for pleasure nor to improve the appearance; it was a measure of precaution that permitted little relaxation from its daily duty. I do not remember any men with very thin hair or bald heads, although a few old women had thin hair. Hair-combing was not so difficult as at first appears. The youths kept the hair oiled and the young women "did up" the hair so smoothly and tightly it combed without trouble. It was the small children who suffered from the straightening of snarls and the necessity for keeping quiet during the operation, which was performed while sitting on the floor with the head between the knees of the operator.

There were other niceties of the toilet, however, which were neglected entirely. I do not remember ever to have seen an early settler clean the teeth. On the other hand, I

do not remember ever to have seen an early settler with poor teeth. A mouthful of decayed, broken or false teeth was unknown. All the care that was given teeth was "picking" them which was done with a sliver, a straw, a sharpened goose-quill or a table-fork; and I believe the "picking" was done more for after-meal pastime or habit than from necessity.

When the children's temporary teeth became loose, a tow-string was hitched on and Mam yanked them out. The child who was reluctant or whimpered was called a "fraidy," a "cowardy-calf" or a "cry-baby" by the other children. Infants, even, were shown little consideration in this field of endeavor. If a "teething baby" was fretful or cried with swollen gums, mam or some neighborhood old granny busied herself with the rusty iron thimble and rubbed the gums until the teeth grated upon it. As usual the infliction was worse than the affliction, but we did not know about, and therefore did not fear the possibilities of blood poison. A resistible tooth pap pulled with the bullet molds.

The teeth of "grown-ups" not only were neglected but they were misused. Threads or cords always were "bit off" with the teeth. When it was necessary to hold an article securely and steadily and which could not be done with the hand grip, it was held with the teeth and jaw-grip. A "stuck" rifle ball was released by the same force. The ramrod-worm was screwed into the bullet, the rod end which extended beyond the gun muzzle was taken between the teeth and the ball twisted out.

More hazelnuts and hickory nuts were cracked with the teeth than were crushed with a mallet or between two stones in the regular way. Teeth were very generously used as a defensive weapon, not alone in the scrimmages of children but by mature fighters. The loss of teeth in the olden days was due either to accident or was the result of a well directed blow from a "fist-i-cuff" opponent.

The stickler for his own tooth brush would not have found favor with us. No one owned a quid of gum—"to

the victor belonged the spoils." The older members of the family chewed the food for the little fellows; one or two spoons went the rounds of the table and men, women and children used the same drinking cup.

The teeth of my parents were strong, even and beautiful throughout their lives and my mother lived to a ripe old age.

CHAPTER V.

Preparation for Farming.

The log-rollings of sixty-five years ago were terrific. The standing timber in the Boone bottom was so dense that a tree cut in the midst could not fall to the ground for lodging in another; so, chopping was begun near an opening.

These open spaces were marshy bottom plots, and the air was black with swarms of mosquitos. It was necessary to keep immense smudges in active operation about the logging area, and the workers decorated their hats with burning punk-sticks as miners wear their lamps.

The helpers came from miles around to assist in log-rollings. Trees were felled and trimmed; the logs dragged together by ox-teams, and the rolling and piling was finished by the men with handspikes. The log-pile then was burned to clear the land for crops.

A part of the underbrush and trimmings was burned about the stumps to deaden them and later they were grubbed out. This lavish waste of wood has always been a source of great regret to me. The sacrifice was wholly unnecessary, for fields of fertile prairie were lying near at hand. We imagined, however, that prairie land would be less productive than the clearings; and in addition to destroying fuel we wasted man-power.

The current understanding of a wood-chopping bee is that wood may be prepared for house use; but the real old-fashioned chopping-bee was the felling of trees, trimming off limbs and severing the cuts to be piled at the log-rollings and burned.

Rail-Mauling.

The word rail-splitting does not convey to the mind an adequate idea of the downright hard work necessary to

prepare posts and rails. A more appropriately fitting word is rail-mauling, which represents an extreme degree of exertion when applied to splitting an oak, hard maple or hickory log.

Whatever the record of the champion rail-maker I think we would have been safe in matching Rube Bennett against him. Rube worked seven days in a week and took little part in any neighborhood recreation; but in a rail-mauling rivalry he was always on hand and an easy champion. Sunday usually was his most strenuous day. He would leave a hilarious crowd, shoulder his ax and maul and remark: "I've some hard butt-cuts to open up, and have to be 'fore-handed'."

The usual winter work day—daylight until dark—with reasonably easy-splitting wood, Rube mauled out one hundred rails for which he received the munificent sum of fifty cents per hundred.

Rube Bennett, Jake and Bill Funk and Mike McGonigal, all bachelors, made their home with our family for from one to three years. They made a specialty of rail mauling. Much of the material for rail-fences on farms near town was furnished by them.

Frakes Family Work.

The family of Patrick Frakes seemed to enjoy their every-day work in the woods regardless of the hard labor of rail-splitting. After meals, pap, with three or four of his boys would lead the procession to the timber. Several trees would be selected. Two choppers, one on either side, were assigned to each tree and there ensued a merry rivalry in falling them. When the trees were down the boys hopped upon the trunk as lively as crickets, and trimmed until the body was shorn of its limbs and the rail-cuts then were severed.

Pap removed his boots that he might stand more firmly upon the log. In his sock-feet, with ax in hands, he began operations on the bull-cut. When a small opening had

been made in the end of the log a steel wedge was inserted and two boys struck it alternate licks with their mauls. As the split widened, two more choppers repeated the operation further along the section. Pap returned to the opening cleft, set in the glut—a short, thick wooden wedge—and the log soon was parted in half.

It was the habit of the Frakes family to work in the woods bareheaded and nearly always barehanded. Their fingers often became numb with cold and they were rubbed briskly with snow until the circulation was restored. The same drastic measures served for chilled feet.

The boys never tired of telling jokes on one another—or what happened or might have happened; and, withal, they were an agreeable, happy and hospitable family.

In my mind's eye I behold Patrick Frakes in mature manhood. His shock of silvered hair was thrown well back from his weather-worn brow and his figure was erect, virile, unshrinking. Standing upon a fallen tree-trunk, with ax at rest, he seemed an incarnation of the Roman gladiator at the close of a victorious conflict. His unwavering look searched the soul of his comrades and his enquiring mind probed a subject for the cause of things. He accepted no ready-made opinions; conformed to no rules that his reason rejected; and he expressed his unfaltering faith in the beneficence and justice of Natural Law.

Fences.

When an old-time enclosure for stock was needed, a tree was felled in the desired direction. The next one was cut in the same line, far enough away for the branches of the second tree to overlap the first; and so on, making a circle, square or any shape preferred or most convenient. A creeping critter might escape through this obstruction of trunks and boughs but a breachy one could not.

The construction of a worm, or snake fence was begun by placing the first string of rails on the ground, zigzag; each turn representing a right angle. The tiers of rail ends

then were laid one above another at alternate angles, to the height of six, eight or ten rails. The worm fence had no corner stays. The usual practice was to lay the worm-rail at the season of the new moon. It was said that rails placed on the ground during the moon's dark phase would settle into the soil and rot rapidly. On the other hand if they were placed during the light of the moon they would not settle but would be preserved indefinitely. The necessity of timing fence making to tally with moon phases was obviated somewhat when the stake-and-rider fence became common.

All garden planting during the early years was done by the signs of the zodiac, and if the moon's phases tallied therewith so much the better for the success of the garden. Home butchering, likewise, was done while the moon was new. It was thought the meat did not shrink in bulk while cooking, as did that prepared when the moon was old. This rule could not be followed in hunting.

Stake and Rider.

The direction outline of the stake-and-rider fence was the same as the rail-worm, but the first rail usually rested on a stump, post or chunk, from eight to sixteen inches high. The intermediate rails then were laid; but before the top one was put in place, two stakes—rails—at each corner were braced in a slanting position from opposite sides of an angle and crossing in X-shape above the rails. The top—or rider-rail—rested in the X formed by the stakes and securely locked the structure against being pushed or hooked down.

The ten-rail, double-stake-and-rider fence often was deemed necessary to confine the long-horned, breachy critters. Rails were built up as high again from the point where the first set of stakes crossed. Then a second set of longer braces were placed as the first ones had been and finished with a rider or locker-rail.

Later, the upright mortised fence posts which received

and held the thin, flat ends of rails was a large saving of material, labor and ground space. We did not construct the stump fences which were common in the more densely wooded localities; and our black soil was not sprinkled with material for stone fences. Gates were unknown. The corner of a double rail-panel was thrown down and spread apart for passage into the field and a set of rail bars were used about the premises. Fence openings were not used except for teams or cattle. Anyone afoot crept through or climbed over.

A paling fence about the cabin yard was an indication of the pioneers' prosperity. Rived from logs, the palings were from four to six inches wide and eight or more feet high. They were placed in an upright position and fastened to a top and bottom rail-frame. Paling fences were not built to protect against invasion, but to confine the hunting bounds.

Cradling, Flailing Grain.

Our first crop was corn and potatoes. When we began to raise small grain the work of harvesting with a cradle was no light undertaking. The cradle followed the shape of an ordinary scythe. There was a rack of several fingers four inches apart with the same curve and length as the blade. The cradle-fingers were fastened to the snath at right angles, and they held the cut grain until it was deposited in a bunch by the cradler. This was a great improvement on the uneven swath left by the scythe.

An unskilled workman could cradle two acres of grain in a day. The seasoned operator, from sunup to sundown, could cut three acres.

The small quantity of grain was flailed on a clean piece of hard ground. A hand-pole with a short, heavy stick of wood fastened to the free end with a leathern hinge, was the flail which we used in pounding and loosening the grain from the hulls. The chaff was blown from the wheat on a windy day by pouring it from one receptacle to another.

Ox Tramping.

Larger quantities of grain were tramped out by the oxen. The bundles were placed in a circle. One end of a rope was hitched to the head of the "nigh" ox, a loose loop in the other end was thrown over a stake in the center of the cleared space. One of the children was placed on the "off" ox and the team was kept moving; tramp, tramp, tramp; round, and round, and round again. This winding-up process was continued until the rider was about to fall from his perch with dizziness when the course was reversed. The oxen then were headed in the other direction and the unwinding was done. The heavy straw was removed after the sheaves had been forked over and over by a pitcher, and well trodden by the oxen. The residue was scraped and swept together and the wind-fanning process removed the chaff.

There was no fanning-mill in use for several years. I believe the first one was made by Dave Sketchley. The fans were fashioned from basswood bark. The machine made the country circuit among the neighbors.

Well Digging.

No wells were dug for several years. Springs, creeks and sloughs furnished the water supply. Men seemed to have no disposition—or perhaps no thought—to lighten the wives' work; for water carrying always fell to the lot of women and children. Spring-water invariably had to be packed up hill and the slough supply was at least a quarter of a mile distant.

Very little effort would have been required to provide wells. The ground was so full of water that only a reservoir was needed. Our first well was but six or eight feet deep, and much greater in circumference than depth. The water always was level with the ground surface, or very near the top. A slab was thrown across it on which we executed innumerable feats of agileness in dipping the water and facing about on the puncheon to return with our

load. That the hogs, or dogs, or young'ns were not drowned ought to prove that fate takes care of its own.

The well from which my family still uses water, and which is declared to be the best in town by hundreds who have drunk it, was dug by my husband with my assistance. The surface-dirt was thrown out to a depth above his head. The earth and shale then were filled into alternating buckets. While I hauled one of them up, hand over hand, and emptied it the other was being filled.

The well is about sixteen feet deep, and six feet of it was drilled and picked from the solid rock. The walling was done with stones which were let down in a bucket. They were laid without mortar and without a scaffold or windlass to support the worker. The work was accomplished by straddling—a foot on either side—and changing his position around and upward as the wall progressed. A rope snubbed around a tree, with a foot-loop at the free end was paid out by me as Tom descended to work. When ready to come out of the well, the rope was securely fastened to the tree and he came up hand over hand with feet against the well-wall.

A wooden curb and windlass were provided after some delay. One of our periodical annoyances was the breaking of the rope, which contingency precipitated the pail into the well; as we possessed but one bucket it had to be fished out with hook or rake before any more water could be drawn.

A generation passed before well-sweeps and the double action pulleys with the "old oaken bucket" came into use.

CHAPTER VI.

Hunting and Trapping—Weapons.

My father kept no record of his big game shooting. No food-fowls nor game-animals were killed for sport or practice. Hunting was done only to replenish the larder or to refill the money-pouch. A particularly successful day or occasion, however, was impressed upon the memory by frequent repetition.

Major Brassfield came to Iowa a year earlier than our family. As the supply of big game became less opulent he moved further along the frontier, which gave him more extended advantages for large killings. He estimated that in his Iowa hunting-work he had killed one hundred and fifty elk. The words deer and elk often were used interchangably by early settlers.

Brassfield's record stands—for different days—as declared by himself: seven deer in one day; six elk in one day; three buffalo in one day; three bears in one day and no account of wolves and smaller varmints was made.

The major made no statement that he ever had shot an Indian; but he invariably gave the redskins credit for simple honesty and fair dealing in all of their transactions with him. He and his stepson, 'Fayette Barnes, were the only two men on the Boone river who did not decamp for the settlements at the time of the Spirit Lake trouble. They sent the family to safety but themselves remained to guard the stock and premises. Brassfield declared that night after night for many weeks he and his son slept upon the cabin floor, one at either door, with loaded rifle ready for instant use. Fortunately no Indians appeared.

Marksmanship.

Wilson Brewer's ability as a marksman was said to be equal to that of his friend Brassfield. Doubtless his record

in deer and elk killings was quite as high, for scores and scores of the animals were killed during the early years of our residence here. Father never returned empty-handed from a hunting trip, and he invariably won a trophy at a shooting-match.

The art of marksmanship, in our family, seems to have been transmitted. My father and brothers were expert marksmen, and my own sons are all excellent shots; the youngest, F. A. Bonebright, for fifteen years belonged to the Iowa National Guard, and was a member of a corps of sharpshooters during the Spanish-American war. He has won many prizes and army medals in marksmanship contests at local, state and national meets.

Flint-Lock Rifle.

The large bore, muzzle-loading, flint-lock gun was a unique weapon. The powder-flask—a bottle—or the powder-horn, made from the horn of an ox, and the bullet-bag were worn slung by a buckskin band over the shoulder and across the breast of the hunter.

The powder for loading was measured from the powder-horn and poured into the gun barrel. An inch-square piece of factory—muslin—was placed over the muzzle, the bullet or buckshot pressed down flush with the edge, and the surplus cloth trimmed off with a bowie, or jack-knife. The wadding and leaden missile were pushed tightly into place with the ramrod. The powder-pan on the gun-lock was filled with powder and the implement of destruction was in readiness.

The contact of the hammer-flint with the upright lock-steel produced a spark which ignited the touch-powder and discharged the gun. This was a precarious method of firing, as the marksman's eyes may have been endangered by the explosion. The powder in the little pan frequently was blown away in windy weather, and the hunter's delay in repriming made possible the loss of game.

The supply of game was greatly reduced before the

FLINT LOCK GUN. SCYTHE. GOURDS. BULLET MOLDS. TOMAHAWK. COAL CARRIERS.
HUNTING ACCESSORIES. WEDGES.

use of percussion-caps became general. The small-bore, rifled-barrel guns made possible a greater degree of accurate shooting.

The different families did not invade the hunting grounds of a neighbor. It might not have been entirely comfortable to do so. It was, however, a question of permitting a hunter to supply his own table with meat or the poacher having to furnish it for him. General hunts and round-ups occasionally were indulged.

Wolf Grounds.

The hillside to the south of Brewer's creek was a favorite haunt for wolves. A string of traps was maintained there for several years. Before leaving the East we had provided ourselves with bear-traps which are large double-spring steel affairs. The jaws are fashioned with pointed teeth which fit together as the cogs on sister wheels. These traps we used for wolves. The combined strength of two men was required to set them, and if a wolf once were entrapped there was small chance of his escape. Occasionally if caught by the leg, and the bones were broken, the animal would liberate himself by cutting away the skin and tendons with his teeth. The effort to escape, however, prolonged but did not save his life, for the bleeding, mutilated leg served well in trailing him to a hiding place or to his lair.

A trapper's method of wonting wolves was to tie a rope about the neck of a newly killed varmint and with the free end over his shoulder drag the wonting-meat for a greater or lesser distance through the woods. The bait was hung in a tree and traps set and concealed for capture of the beast.

A pioneer hardly could exaggerate the number of wolves which infested this part of the country; and each individual early settler assisted in the extermination of the canis family in numbers which ran into the hundreds.

Wolf Killing.

One of the pleasant although occasionally exciting occupations of pioneer times was the early spring work in our sugar-bush, located on the farm now owned by my son, F. A. Bonebright, which farm then was thickly wooded.

Holes were bored a few inches into the trunks of hard maple trees. Spiles or split sections of Elder or Sumac stalks from which the pith had been removed were inserted in the holes and the sap caught in sugar-trough gourds or other receptacles. During sap-season the sweet water was used for coffee making.

When the tree-leaves had expanded to the size of squirrels' ears, the last runs were made and the sugar water was boiled down for the season's supply of maple-sugar and syrup. Many a day I was sent alone to the sugar-brush to carry in the water and boil the syrup. I worked from daybreak to midday and from noon until twilight, happy and unafraid; although I easily might have been captured by Indians or devoured by wolves or wildcats.

Concerted action was necessary during the busy sugar-season to care for the output. "Sugarin'-off" parties were invited any evening during the melting weather of March and the boys and "gals" alternately stirred the boiling maple juice, or sauntered on the shadowy outskirts of camp. All hands were present, however, at the close of the evening's work to participate in the sugarin', and there was a good-humored rivalry among the several pot-tenders to produce the finest flavored and richest colored commodity.

One evening my brother Jack and Cinda Schultz were late in arriving at camp. They had just crossed the foot-log near the creek's mouth at the Chase mill site, when they were startled by the yelp of a wolf only a few yards away.

The couple retreated to the middle of the log-bridge. Lucinda was told to sit down and keep silent. Jack examined his musket, and the two waited and watched intently for the appearance of the animal. The wolf came nearer, each howl indicating the direction of approach. For a

TRAPPED WOLVES.

moment the moonbeams lighted the trail to the south of them and disclosed the dark form of the hungry varmint. Jack's musket spoke; and the yelp of anticipation was changed to the dying whine of the wolf.

Immediately an answering shot was fired from the sugar-bush and loitering was forgotten.

The wolves for several weeks had been unusually active and rapacious. They had killed several shoats and a fine fat yearling calf. On this particular evening the pack had prowled persistently about the sugar-camp. Because of their proximity a number of couples had given up the evening stroll; but knowing they were safe within the campfire radius they treated with raillery the more or less perilous situation.

When the shot sounded from the creek Phil Jenkins, who happened to be near the stack of arms, fired a reply and reloaded while the other boys secured their weapons. Starting ahead of the rescue party Phil's first leap into the underbrush revealed the crouching form of an immense wolf with gleaming eyes and glistening teeth. The young man fired and raced back into the light to reload.

The boys shouted to Phil: "Look after the girls!" and all ran precipitately into the shadows of the adjoining wood, each at a different point. Before a score of steps were made the crack of half a dozen guns was heard and half a dozen boys retreated into camp to recharge their rifles.

A second shot resounded from the creek, and a concerted shout with the shots of rescuers gave answer. Still another shot from the distance and the answering scream of women at the camp ought to have scared away a colony of coyotes or pack of timber wolves. The excitement was intense—Phil Jenkins no longer could endure inaction. "Keep up the fires, girls!" he yelled, and "made off" in the direction of the creek.

Scarcely had he cleared the circle of illumination when he was attacked so suddenly that, in firing, he missed his mark. He clubbed his gun but the stock was broken with

the first blow. He turned to flee and the wolf sprang upon him; but the girls, with firebrands, rushed to his rescue and fought off the animal. His clothing, however, was badly torn and his flesh lacerated by the teeth and claws of the ravenous beast.

Still another shot from the creek indicated that Jack and his fellow-prisoner on the foot-log were making a good defense; and the longer intervals between the shots of the rescuing party gave assurance that the remnant of the pack was being dispersed.

Jack was the hero of the hour and Cinda a close second as heroine; although their position was no more perilous than that of the girls in camp or of the rescuers, John Prime, Hez VanDorn, Stephe Schultz, Joth Lyon, Roll Brewer, Jimmy Peabody and Phil Jenkins.

Thirteen wolves were killed that evening; four of them were shot by Jack Brewer within a dozen feet of the foot-log on which he and Miss Schultz were marooned. The sugaring-off was delayed somewhat by this interruption. The "batch" was a "leetle" scorched; but we were all glad there were no disastrous results from the frightful experience.

Escape From a Deer.

Hunters did not go far from their cabins, during the early years, without their guns and bowie-knives. An established habit of my father was: not to lay down the gun without reloading. By observing this rule he missed no opportunity for procuring game and probably prolonged his life.

I recall an exciting experience with a deer which father had shot. He leaned the rifle against a tree, drew his knife and prepared to bleed the fallen animal. At his approach the creature sprang to his feet and charged savagely upon the hunter. To save himself from being horned to death father seized the antlers of the crazed beast and a fierce tussel followed.

His knife, which had been taken between the teeth, was dropped during the struggle. For what seemed a very long time, but in reality could have been but a few minutes, father's efforts were directed toward keeping a firm hold on the horns of the brute while escaping contact with the trees about him.

The bullet had reached a vital spot, but the victim's vitality was unusual and he finally weakened from loss of blood. Father dextrously dodged a tree and at the same time thrust the antlers downward and brought the head of the buck against the obstruction. The beast dropped to his knees but blindly bunted the tree in an effort to destroy the supposed antagonist while father recovered his gun and knife. It was unnecessary, however, to waste a second bullet and the dying animal was stuck with the bowie-knife.

Preparation was made for drawing, but the venison was discovered to be unfit for food. Discoloration of meat was a condition often found in game-animals which had been unduly excited, worried or angered by hunters or hounds. Such congestion was more marked if closely pursued by human hunters than if followed by animal enemies. Many times when the day's deer-stalking had ended successfully the hunter could claim no recompense except the hide of his victim—the meat being valueless.

The same day father shot another deer which dropped to the ground at the report of the gun, exactly as the other one had done. The hunter ran forward, seized the creature by the nose, turned the head to expose the throat for the purpose of bleeding him. In a flash the animal sprang up, shook his head and snorted loudly. Not wishing to repeat the episode of the morning father started at a double-quick gait toward a fallen tree a few rods away.

The buck followed with much bawling, snorting and trampling of bushes, which noises apparently held unusual menace. Father leaped upon the trunk of the tree and took refuge in its branches beyond the reach of the deer. His precaution, however, was unnecessary. The wounded crea-

ture was not pursuing him but was making the final, spasmodic attempt to escape.

Father frequently related the joke of having been treed by a dying deer but he usually made the excuse that "Jerushy"—the name of his gun—seemed to be shooting several points in the wind, that day.

One could incur the displeasure of an "airly" day hunter, or raise the ire of a marksman by stepping over the gun while it was being cleaned and oiled. We were as careful to avoid crossing pap's gun as we were of meddling with mam's spinning materials. The former was thought to bring ill-luck to the hunter, but the latter really did bring ill-luck to the meddler in the form of a sound scolding or a "box on the ear with five red-headed nails in it."

Twenty-seven Deer in Two-Days' Hunt.

In a two-day's hunt near the old steam mill site in the northwest part of town, my father killed twenty-seven deer. A heavy snow had fallen. Then came a thaw, followed by a freeze which left on the snow's surface, a crust which broke through with every step of the animals and made it next to impossible for them to escape.

Jack, Roll and father started hunting in the morning. The first deer-tracks were sighted at about the court house corner, and were followed a couple of hundred rods northwest where the herd was located. Father, in the lead, shot three deer before the boys came up. It was decided that he continue hunting while the young men were to bleed, draw and hang the carcasses in the trees; and throughout the day they were kept busy at the work.

At nightfall the boys built a camp-fire; spitted venison, and prepared to pass the night near the game and prevent depredations by wolves. Father returned home. Early the following morning, with a yoke of oxen and a sled, he set out for camp.

At the close of the two-days' hunt twenty-seven deer had been killed. They represented ages from no antlers,

to brockets and crockets. The game was stored in the house on account of freezing weather until it could be prepared for market.

I believe this deer record was the highest ever made in this vicinity.

An account of the first deer and elk shooting may be found in chapter one.

Wild Hogs.

This part of the country was not infested with wild hogs, although the Des Moines river hunters reported that several bunches of them ranged north through their districts during the summer, and the ones which escaped their guns straggled back in the fall.

The sultan at the head of a drove of wild hogs is a ferocious beast. Young, aspiring boars are killed by the leader in a finish fight or driven away from the herd; or perhaps the old male is killed, whereupon the victor appropriates the place and assumes the responsibilities of leader. New colonies are formed by the separation of parent herds and a number of the females following a young male mate.

A boar and half a dozen sows had ranged as far north as Terwilliger creek, south of town. They were making havoc among the sheep, pigs and chickens of the settlers. The dogs trailed the brutes with little enthusiasm and less success. The neighbors had used the various methods of baiting, trapping and trailing, and had succeeded in killing the females but the male had escaped.

Word was sent to our hunters with the request to bring the best dog and come to assist in the hog-killing. Roll, with Typ and Cap, two of our prize trailers, started for the rendezvous.

The hog-trail was "picked up" before the meeting place was reached. The dogs were kept in leash and the porcine home finally located. The he-hog, minus his harem, had selected a sheltered spot half way up the steep bank of the creek where the erosion of nature had caused a tree to fall

with branches toward the stream. The mound of earth and tangled roots gave protection from the front and the excavation made by the removal of roots had been filled by the hog with grasses and rushes. A quite artistic and secure bark and brush covering had been drawn by him to a small opening for an entrance.

Mr. Hog was not at home when the hunter arrived. Roll decided his best move would be to tie the dogs out of reach on the fallen tree-trunk, and take his own position thereon to await the return of the beast to his lair.

While debaing the best position the dogs with loosened leashes, sprang into the underbrush and before the hunter could draw a bead upon his mark the boar plunged into his burrow.

The dogs were tied and Roll took his stand commanding the opening to the den. For a long time he waited almost motionless and breathless, but the hog did not come forth. The shadows were beginning to lengthen. Waiting grew tiresome so the dogs were turned loose to harrass his hogship and drive him into the open where he could be shot.

The hounds, tearing at his shelter, soon brought the boar out and to bay. An instant he paused before charging the dogs or the hunter. That instant his death sentence was signed with a rifle bullet from Roll's gun.

The hunter and dogs covered the couple of remaining miles to Terwilliger's at a double quick gait where they arrived before dark. The party which had come together for the day's hunt had grown tired or waiting for Roll and several of the men had gone home.

"You are pretty late, young man," said Terwilliger, as the nimrod approached. "We have decided to get together in the morning and make an early start."

"There's no use to get together tomorrow to kill that hog," replied Roll.

"What's the reason?" demanded Terwilliger. "When our young stock goes to pasture, we ain't sure any more that they will ever come back."

"Well," remarked Roll, complacently, "that wild hog

won't kill any more critters for he is dead himself."

The details of the day then were related and great satisfaction was expressed by all present. Roll remained over night at the Terwilliger home. In the morning the hunters accompanied him to the scene of the hog shooting.

The tusks of the animal were kept for a long time as a reminder of the only wild boar killed in this vicinity. He weighed about three hundred pounds, but the weight was in the bony frame instead of flesh. His legs were very long, and his head and nose formed almost half the length of his body.

It has been stated that Iowa wild hogs may have been descendants from the domesticated hogs which had become wild in their habits since the early settlement of the state. If the theory be true, this particular specimen had reverted to type with absolute thoroughness and accuracy of physical detail and disposition.

Elk Hunt; Locked Antlers.

My father had patiently trailed an elk from early morning until late afternoon. Coming warm upon the trail he heard the peculiar cry of the species. Hurrying forward to an opening among the trees he beheld the elk he had been stalking in deadly combat with a bull of smaller build. The antlers of the combatants had become inextricably locked at the first charge; which, to the trained hunter, meant death to both animals.

The beasts gave no heed to the human intruder, and for a long time he watched an equally balanced battle between age and weight on one side, and youth and activity on the other. The smaller elk at length secured an advantage in leverage, and the horns—together with a part of the skull—were torn from the head of the heavier antagonist; and with an almost human cry he dropped dying to the ground.

The exhausted victor sank to his knees for rest. Noticing father near at hand he uttered a low bellow, shook his head in the effort to free himself from the antlers of his

dead enemy and made several ineffectual attempts to charge, but handicapped by the weight upon his horns his over-wrought forces refused to respond and a rifle ball finished him.

These locked antlers were kept for many years as a curiosity; and were finally given to a prospector named Hopkins, who promised to mount the unique pairs. I have heard of a small number of such specimens, although I have seen but this one set.

Wildcats.

Our boys made a hunting trip to Head grove during the early years. They were out several days through a severe storm, and came home empty handed.

They reported good success before the opening of the storm. The game they had taken was skinned, drawn and hung in the trees. The skins were wrapped and securely tied about the carcasses awaiting the joint efforts of the party to remove them to camp.

The blizzard broke with such fury that all movements were abandoned. When the storm abated, the hunters on account of deep snow, prepared to return home. They made the circuit from tree to tree where the venison carcasses had been suspended, but the skeletons only remained. The meat had been devoured by wildcats. Even the skins were torn to shreds and were worthless.

Wildcats were numerous and not at all afraid of hunters. They were not so large as the lynx. They would not attack a human being but did not run from one. The varmints, however, were as ravenous as wolves when hungry, and would devour game in about the same way. It was the usual measure of precaution for hunters to keep a sharp lookout for cat "sign," when there was stored game or carcasses in the open awaiting removal to camp.

It would be a conservative estimate to say that hundreds of wildcats were killed in the immediate vicinity of our city.

BUFFALO. WOLF. SKUNK. WILDCAT. BEAR.

Elk Hunt.

One winter day, Jack, Roll and Little Bill Brewer tracked an elk from the mouth of the White-Fox creek along up the river. From the trail of blood and the trampled condition of the snow the boys decided the beast was having a terrific fight with wolves.

At intervals of about eighty rods a stand was made by the elk, and the wolves sought to surround and subdue him. For defense at these places the bull had wheeled about on his hind legs describing a circle; and evidently had struck with such rapidity and precision with his fore-feet, that from one to three wolves were killed at each stopping place.

This spirited defense caused the attacking animals to retire a short distance where they sat in a circle upon their haunches to prevent the escape of the elk. When rested they would renew the onslaught.

The trail was followed for a couple of miles when the boys sighted the fast-failing animal with the pack at his heels. Several of the wolves were shot, the remainder were frightened away and the elk was killed by Little Bill Brewer.

It was the rule of hunters that: he who drew first blood from a venison animal received the hide and tallow—the most valuable portion at that time. As Roll had no family the division of meat was made between the older men and they departed for home. After taking the wolves' pelts Roll struck out upon another trail, and during the afternoon killed four does and a staggard almost within sight of the home of Jack, one of his companions of the forenoon.

Bears.

Bears could not have been numerous in this locality before our arrival or Major Brassfield, who was a better-trained hunter and owned better weapons than our party, would have had a longer notch-stick representing bear-killings. I recall but one of his stories which, however, was not a real bear hunt.

One evening at sunset the dogs created an unusual commotion in the stable-yard. It was found, upon investigation, that a bear had climbed a tree either to get a chicken-supper or to escape from the dogs. Brassfield confined the hounds in the cabin, procured a long pole and prodded bruin until he began to descend from the tree.

A bullet pierced his brain as his hind-feet touched the ground, and this young, fat animal furnished the basis for the Major's declaration that: "bear-steak is powerful good eatin'."

Our boys discovered bear-sign only a few times. One night, two specimens going northward, prowled about the Aunt Nancy Stanley place on the north hill. They helped themselves to a couple of crocks of milk at the spring-house and a small quantity of jerked venison. They were tracked to Batch grove where the trail was abandoned. Other signs were seen along the Skunk creek and near Mud lake but bruin succeeded in avoiding our hunters.

Bear Shot With Bow and Arrows.

One bright spring morning after the men-folk had gone to work, a small black bear appeared in our bee-yard. The children scampered to the house and reported to mother. She closed the door and cautioned silence and we waited the outcome of the honey theft.

Meanwhile, John Thomas carefully, but hurriedly, tightened his bow-string and with his heaviest arrows slipped outside.

Bruin nosed leisurely among the bee-gums, which were large or small sections of hollow logs. He chose one with a large opening. Rearing upon his hind legs he pulled it over, and with fore paws began clawing out the comb and helping himself to the honey.

The bees swarmed out and settled upon him. Suddenly he pitched headforemost to the ground and rolled and grunted as if in great agony. The bees were stinging him

mercilessly but we soon found that was not the cause of his fall.

John Thomas, from behind a tree, had been using his bow and arrows with good effect. Several of the steel-tipped shafts were sticking in the bear's body. One of them penetrated the ear of the victim and, apparently, partially paralyzed him. When we realized the bear was disabled, mother prepared a sulphur smudge which quieted the bees, and the bear was knocked in the head with an ax.

The shot which saved that hive of honey doubtless was due to luck instead of good marksmanship; but the older hunters who had spent days in the unsuccessful hunt for bears were greatly chagrined that the boy sportsman had bagged a bear which had come to our door.

This specimen had not been faring sumptuously—perhaps he had just awakened from his winter's nap. His carcass was very thin and devoid of fat, so we did not prepare the meat for food.

Elk Tied With a Log Chain.

Nearly all pioneer hunting exploits are similar in their action whether results are equal or not. The methods of one man follow a parallel with another, except for an occasional freak of fancy or an unaccountable lapse from the usual soundness of judgment.

Major Brassfield, in taking aim at a young elk, either had miscalculated the distance of his target or the animal may have moved. Instead of reaching a vital spot the bullet crashed through both shoulders stunning and crippling him. Wishing to try out the buck's tractableness or perversity the hunter decided to surprise his family by bringing in a live elk.

He hitched a light log chain about the critter's neck and started; but the elk did not stir. The Major pulled on one end of the chain and the elk on the other. The log chain did not part so one or the other of the contestants alternately was taken over the ground at a lively clip. If the

animal took on too much speed the Major whipped the log-chain around a tree and brought the beast to a halt.

The crippled elk grew weak from the excitement and painful exertion, so Brassfield succeeded in getting him into line and bringing the critter to the river's bank opposite the hunter's home where the victim laid down and would not budge. The chain hook was thrown over a limb. The Major mudded the wounds of the elk and proceeded to dress his own hands which were torn and bleeding from contact with the slipping and looping log chain and end-hook.

He had done what he had undertaken, however; he had brought home the living elk. The animal was confined in an enclosure and kept for several years.

Home-Made Gun.

Perhaps the children of the Lyon family remember the old home-made gun which Uncle Peter assembled from the parts of several broken and dismembered shooting-irons.

For several weeks there had been signs of an immense sized deer near the Lyon home—now the Dave Sketchley place—but the animal had kept clear of the hunters.

After the week's supply of wood was chopped, Roll was given permission to visit at the Lyon homestead. During his stay he was told about the deer and the boys regretfully related that they were unable to take him. Roll said: "I would like to try tracking that stag." He was handed the home-made gun, and a roar of laughter followed. The chances for killing anything with the weapon looked very dubious but he proceeded to reconnoiter.

On a point of the hill north of town the track of the deer was discovered and followed to near where the River street wagon-bridge now is located. Down the valley a short distance the hunter saw the deer browsing. Taking careful aim he fired but missed the mark. The bullet ranged to the right, and the report of the gun did not seem even to alarm the animal; for after listening a moment he resumed feeding.

Crawling on all fours Roll made a detour which brought him directly in front of the beast. It always is difficult to approach a wild animal from windward but it was done by making an angle at the desired distance. This time the hunter took aim at a spot that he estimated would be six inches to the left of the deer's breast, pulled the trigger, and the stag fell with a bullet in his heart.

My brother related this exploit with great pride; for, with approved brands of weapons all the community's members unsuccessfully had hunted this stag. He was the largest deer ever killed in this vicinity and was described as being the size of a two year old colt.

The same afternoon, after several failures, Roll shot a small deer wearing only brow-tines; but he decided that Uncle Peter Lyon, although he had but one good eye, was a success as a gunsmith.

Members of our family and the Lyon children became very proficient with bows and arrows. Many squirrels and wood-fowl were bagged in that way.

The archer was painfully fastidious in the work of weapon making, as well as in the careful method of stringing his bow. The slender, smooth-grained pieces of hickory were whittled into shape for the bow and the finishing touches given by filing, and scraping with a bowie-knife. Many of the arrows were tipped with steel—pieces of sharpened knitting needles—and adjustment was secured by trying out at a target.

The outstanding characteristic of pioneers must be patience. I have known our youngsters to work hard all day at the archer field and if they made but one good hit they were encouraged for the next day's effort, and the practice was kept up throughout the season.

Wild Turkeys.

There was, in our family, an old gun which had belonged to our grandfather Brewer and had been given to his son Wilson. The gun was an ancient model and use

had reduced its efficiency to the vanishing point. The lock was loose, the stock shattered and splintered. The implement of destruction was considered to be more dangerous to the marksman than to the game target. Occasionally, however, when all other firearms were being utilized this gun was pounded into line and strapped into adjustment for use.

The gobble, gobble, gobble of a flock of wild turkeys feeding through the Funk bottom, one day arrested the attention of our boys. Father and the neighbors were hunting with the regular firearms, so Roll thonged the revolutionary blunderbus and shot sixteen of the birds after the dogs had driven them to shelter in the trees. Many more could have been taken but for the delay of re-tying and re-pounding the gun's parts after the shattering effect of each discharge.

Wild turkey meat was in greater favor with us than that of the strong-flavored wild water-fowl. The roasted poults or the year old hens were firm but juicy and delicately flavored. Wild turkey eggs, also, were more palatable than wild goose or wild duck eggs.

Shooting turkeys on the wing was not usually successful. If the birds were not dropped instantly the wounded victims, after falling, would run to cover and hide. Without a good retriever losses were inevitable.

Three Deer Killed Before Breakfast.

A young brother who only was permitted to use the poorest guns when they were not in use by the older hunters, struck out early one morning toward the Bill Funk woods south of town. He scanned the hillside and bottom clearing and was surprised to see three deer lying close together near where the Chicago and Northwestern railway outlines the field of my son, Frank.

He fired and killed one of them. The other two jumped to their feet and seemed to be bewildered but they did not run. John Thomas re-loaded and shot another one. The

remaining animal leaped about in a circle, evidently at a loss what to do. The delay gave the boy ample opportunity to re-load and shoot the third deer.

The young hunter hurried home and related the exploit. His story was not credited at first, but members of the family finally accompanied him to the spot and helped to dress and bring home the carcasses.

Another morning before breakfast this brother shot seven geese. These early morning achievements with firearms may give the impression that women were not especially energetic in preparing a meal. It should be stated, however, that there was an abundant supply of game almost at our doors. It must be remembered likewise, that corn dodger was baked fresh for each meal, and fish or venison was fried at the fireplace for every morning repast.

John Thomas was the fisher of the family; with hook or spear he kept the table supplied when the trap was not in use.

The Skunk.

The family introduction to the pioneer polecat occurred one warm spring evening on the Eyer place. The little animal on a visit to the ox-stable presumably was stepped upon by one of the oxen. Such careless treatment evidently enraged the injured varmint for he liberally poured the vials of his wrath upon the unsuspecting ox and contiguous surroundings.

The critters were panic-stricken; and bellowing with fear they rushed wildly from shelter and sought immunity in the deep water of the creek.

The defense had been so well directed and so generously applied that it finally was decided to burn the stable. We considered ourselves very fortunate that the attack had not been made on a member of the family or the cabin.

The fire insurance agent had not invaded "these parts" at that time, consequently we were not prosecuted for arson.

The field of action was cleared and the injured polecat located near his burrow. He was killed and the skunk-house dug open. Fortunately for the diggers the mother skunk was not at home, but the eight pretty kittens did not grow to the size to commit barn-yard depredations.

We did not sell skunk-skins during the early days, perhaps because we did not understand the art of capturing the fearless little varmint without arousing his wrath.

The Iowa Polecat.

A hunting tour to the vicinity of Bach grove was planned by "Hez" Van Dorn and Roll Brewer. One of the incidents of the trip was an experience with the Iowa polecat.

Preparations for short distance hunting trips usually were made to remain several days. Shelter was prepared with brush, wagon-box and quilts. After rising in the morning the boys rolled their bedding into a bundle and laid it aside to facilitate the work of cooking and gun-cleaning. As game was brought to camp during the day it was dressed and hung up to await the home-coming.

One evening when the boys returned to camp an uninvited guest with a delicately shaped head and a black and white fur coat occupied a seat of honor on top of the roll of bedding. Like the real aristocrat the little creature seemed quite undisturbed at the appearance of the hunters, and although they made frantic but gentle efforts to dislodge him the skunk maintained his position.

Finally, in desperation, Hez declared that the little visitor would have to make a trip by the rifle route, but which man should be the executioner? Neither one wanted to assume the responsibility of missing or wounding the polecat. They drew cuts for the chance. Roll won; seized his gun and with the warning caution from Hez: "For God's sake don't miss him!" he fired and the skunk instantly was killed. The accurate shot probably relieved the boys from the necessity of burying bedding, sacrificing the game already taken and the extra work of re-locating camp.

Hunting and Trapping Record.

The young pioneer hunters seemed more enthusiastic in trailing game than their elders. Roll Brewer's highest record for one day's hunt was: five deer, a wolf and a fox. His highest record for one day's trapping was: four beavers, one otter, one mink, three polecats, two wolves and fifteen muskrats. The mink, otter and beavers were caught within a radius of about two rods square, at a point near the Illinois Central railway bridge.

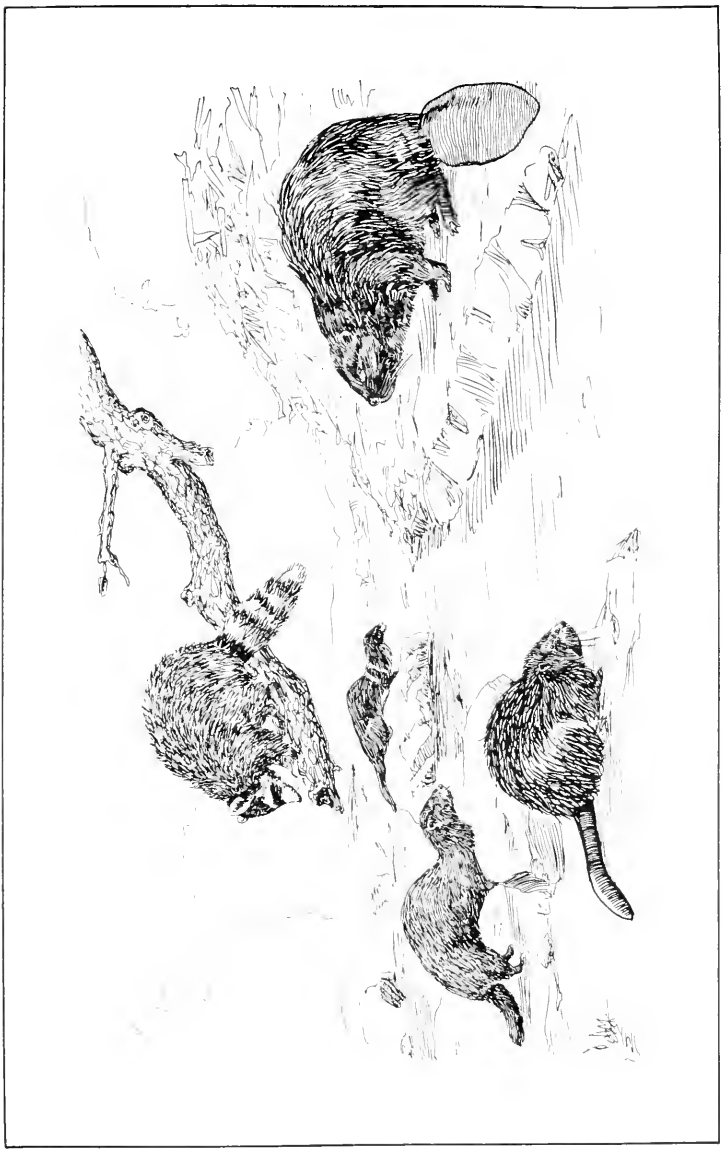
Trapping work was much more tedious and tiresome than hunting. A greater degree of caution was required in tracking, and more patience was necessary in studying the haunts and habits of fur-bearing animals. To successfully locate, arrange and set traps, a natural skill is indispensable.

A good trapper could attend from thirty to fifty traps. They usually ranged over a trail of from fifteen to twenty-five miles a day. If catches were heavy the animals were skinned at once to relieve the trapper of the weight; otherwise they were hauled to camp on a hand-sled and taken care of after supper. Trapping camps were located in the fall and changed as often as fur-bearers thinned out. Trappers often remained from home several weeks, but I do not remember that we felt alarm at their extended absence.

Muskrats, Mink, Otter, Beaver.

Muskrats, like house-rats, seemed to follow settlement. They were not numerous when we arrived but within a few years a hundred muskrats a day were brought in from trapping and spearing.

The first muskrat house seen by us was a burrow of grass and dirt at a point near the Edward's Hole on the south bend of the river. Gradually thereafter their numbers increased. Later when beaver, otter and mink had been trapped off, muskrats were sought quite as industriously as the more aristocratic members of the fur-bearing family had been.



OTTER. COON. MINK. MUSKRAT. BEAVER.

Full grown muskrat hides, during the early years, brought but five cents apiece. The skins of kittens were sold for two or three cents and they had to be in prime condition to bring that price.

It was four or five years before the first house-rat appeared. He was tracked across the prairie for miles before he was caught and his identity revealed. The numbers of this branch of the rodent family increased almost with phenominal rapidity, for they were not a commercial asset and were not trapped.

Our trappers made the mistake, the first season, of carelessly stepping in the runs of the fur-bearers along the banks of the creeks and through the grass, thereby delaying their success in trapping. Experience soon taught them that scrupulous care was necessary to mask trap-setting work and reduce to a minimum the man-smell about beaver, otter or mink haunts by wading in the water when practicable, instead of stepping on the bank.

Traps set under water at the foot of an otter slide were reasonably sure to catch the web-footed carnivore. The same tactics usually would secure the wary beaver. Mink, also, were peculiarly cunning in avoiding traps, and when caught would fight fearlessly for life. Many times the creatures gnawed away parts of the body to escape from a trap. Our first mink was caught a few rods north of the Chase mill site where there was a large sulphur spring.

The best hunting-grounds for beaver and otter were on the White-Fox, Beaver and Otter creeks. The large number of these animals did not indicate that they had been very sedulously trapped by the Indians, but they were quite as shy of the first trap set for them as at the hundredth attempt at capture.

Perhaps the three last beavers caught on Beaver creek were taken by Roll Brewer. The traps were set in the evening, as indicated above, at a point where the casteroids entered the water in the pond formed by their dam after leaving the burrow in the bank. In the morning the mother beaver and two kittens were captives.

Mink skins sold in Des Moines for fifty cents each. Beaver skins brought two dollars, and up per pound—according to the season and primeness of the pelts. The skin of a medium-sized beaver weighed a pound, or perhaps a little more. Otter skins were sold for seventy-five cents to a dollar a foot; and the trapper, accordingly, stretched the skin to its lineal capacity. The longest otter-skin sold by our boys measured a little over seven feet from tip to tip—the end of the nose to the end of the tail.

Hides for Market.

The drying of flat hides for market was accomplished in this way. A square pole frame was used. Small holes were bored or burned through the poles at intervals of a few inches apart, and a skin was laced to the frame with basswood bark or buckskin thongs. The poles were spread apart and the hides stretched taut. They then were left to dry. When the number of hides outnumbered the pole-frame supply they were nailed to the logs on the outside of the cabin and on the door. The hides from animals killed only a few days before a marketing trip were salted and bundled instead of being stretched and dried.

The uncut skins of smaller fur-producers such as beaver, otter, mink and coon, usually were stretched tightly over shakes which were trimmed to a point at one end where a hole was bored to facilitate hanging or carrying. Stretchers were removed when the skins were dry and used throughout the season. Occasionally the skins were pulled over a hickory withe which was bent into U-shape. The withe stretcher possessed the merit of being light and easily carried when suspended by a rope over the trapper's shoulder.

When special marketing trips were made, several teams were necessary. A number of the neighbors co-operated and a procession of loads were put into line say, two or three loads of venison, a load of green hides, a load of flat hides and a load of furs. The return trip from Des Moines

or Dubuque meant almost as heavy a consignment of home supplies. There never were any "one-way" empty wagons for pioneers.

Tanning.

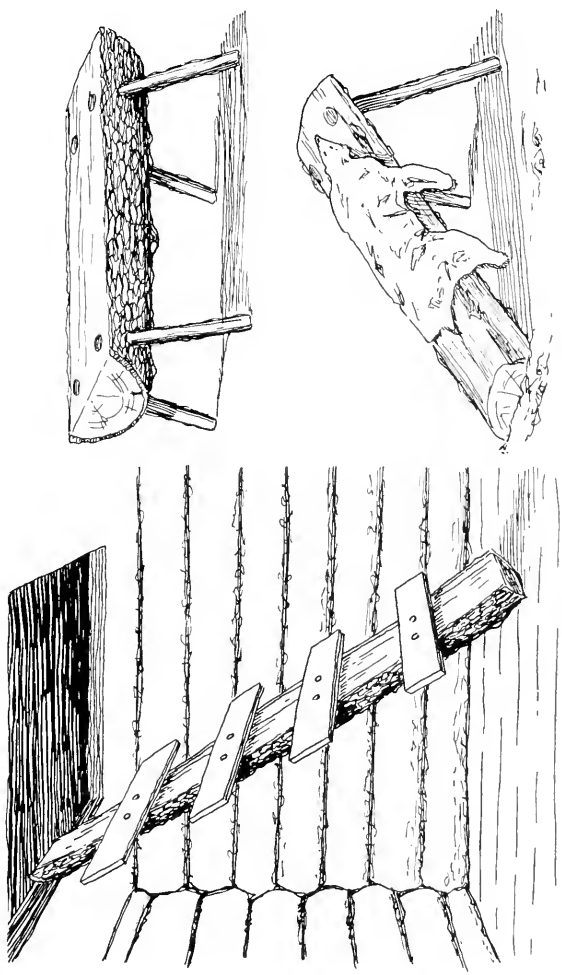
Tanning was a little out of our line although we were compelled to do some of it. When Mam happened to have an inferior kettle of softsoap it was turned over to the men folk for use in tanning. Hides were immersed in the soapy solution to remain until the fur or hair could be slipped off together with the very thin outer skin. Occasionally the young boys slipped a squirrel or small varmint's skin into the regular soap barrel. If removed before the hair slipped the women folk were none the wiser, but if left a trifle too long and hair was discovered in the soap there was something doing in the jacket-dusting line.

The regular tanning work was a long process of fermentations and soaking in ash, alum or lime water after the brains of the animal to which the hide belonged had been pounded into its inner surface. There was the interminable washing and cleansing process and the bath in an oak-bark brew as a finisher. The "brains" treatment was said to firm and full the skin, and packing in dried fowl manure or dog dung was the method of softening the leather.

Finishing the skins after the wet process was no small undertaking. They were pounded, pulled, scraped, stretched, rubbed and twisted to insure pliability. This work was done by men, women or children, at any time or place and by any means or method which promised the greatest speed and excellence. The Indian color and smell were imparted by means of a huge smudge set in the smoke house. Deer hides were our most satisfactory tanning material.

Scraping Horse.

Fresh skins, or those in the process of tanning, were taken to a "scraping-horse" when it was necessary to



PUNCHEON LADDER. PUNCHEON BENCH. SCRAPING HORSE.

remove flesh or fat from the raw surface. The "horse" was made from a piece of puncheon. Two holes were bored in the flat surface of the slab and pole-legs were inserted in them. This raised one end of the "scraping-horse" about three feet high while the other end rested on the ground. The hide was placed on the smoothed, rounded upper surface of the puncheon with hair or fur side down. The operator, with a dull draw-shave scraped from, instead of toward himself, until the skin-surface was cleared of fat or meaty adhesions.

A wolf-pelt apron, skin side out, was worn for hide cleaning. The apron prevented some damage to clothing from grease or the tanning solution. It was used all the year 'round—or until it disintegrated.

I have made hundreds of pairs of beaver, otter, coon-skin, sheepskin, calfskin, dogskin and buckskin mittens and gloves by hand. The work was continued until machine made hand-wear and the scarcity of home produced skins necessitated its discontinuance.

Glove and mitten sewing were done with the hand back-stitch—one at a time, each stitch ahead overlapping the one behind it. The seams were welted which made three thicknesses of skin to be sewed through. Waxed linen thread and a three-cornered needle were used, and if the needle slipped while pulling the stitch through, a deep cut across the thumb and forefinger was the result. When finished these articles did not rip. Glove turning was a long and tedious work. Beaver, coon, or otter backs with home-tanned buckskin palms sold for $10 a pair. Later the dog-skin backs and calfskin fronts were much cheaper.

CHAPTER VII.

Early Professional Men.

A unique company assembled at Newcastle in the late summer of 1851. A Methodist exhorter named Hughes visited our town at the solicitation of Uncle Billy Stanley. Elder Hughes hoped to be able to establish a permanent ministerial circuit; so, a camp-meeting was called to convene at our home. The season was not an auspicious one for company. Almost no crops had been raised, but although material benefits were withheld we were very glad to be alive and well.

Invitations were sent to the settlers about the country—at Fort Dodge, Homer, Pea Ridge and Marshalltown. Large numbers attended and remained over the four days' session. The attendants from the military post at Fort Dodge brought with them a well-filled list of commissary supplies which was most fortunate for them—and for us. Several Indians were present and brought in game every day.

Arrangements were made for cooking out of doors under a pole frame-work covered with boughs which furnished protection from sunshine or a light shower. Forked sticks supported the poles from which were suspended the cooking-pots. Meat was stewed in the half-barrel sized kettles which were utilized—at other times—for sugar-sap or soft soap boiling. These meat orders were pieced out with jerked venison and smoked fish. Some of the settlers brought supplies of coffee and potatoes.

For potato baking a hole was dug in the ground and partly filled with heated stones, upon which the potatoes were placed. Ashes and live coals were heaped on top of them and they were left until done. The Indian bucks were adepts at potato roasting.

Several days before the date of the meeting we were kept busy in preparation. The corn-cracker was worked overtime to furnish a sufficiency of meal. Elder Hughes arrived a couple of days ahead of the company. In order that the supply of corn-dodger might be kept in advance of consumption he suggested that we at once begin baking. This was done; and the cakes were corded in rows on the shelves of the cabin. The fatted sheep was prepared for the feast, but the quality of mutton-stew on that occasion, today would not influence a prodigal's return to his home and family.

Groups of from two to four attendants arrived afoot. The same number tramped beside a horse or took turns in riding the beast, and whole families came with oxen and covered-wagons.

The tents which we had brought from the East still were in fair condition and with the prairie-schooners were utilized for shelter and sleeping quarters. It, however, was more comfortable to rest at night in the open air in close proximity to the many smudges. The mosquito was no respector of members of either secular or religious assemblies; and billions strong, his industrious family demanded attention night and day.

The sessions were held in the edge of the grove and were characterized by their length and monotony. The exhorter taxed his powers of endurance in speech and ours in listening. Several of the visitors signified their desire to follow the lowly Master, but I did not identify myself with the movement.

The week was a memorable one to me. Not because it was the first religious gathering, but on account of the week's strenuous work of cooking for the crowd of hungry attendants. The copious supply of spiritual food dispensed by Elder Hughes in no way reduced the physical appetite of the apostles of faith. Many of the visitors assisted in preparing the meals, but I never have been able to appreciate the effort which was necessary to care for the members of the assemblage.

Early Ministers.

I suppose that Rev. Bird, of Des Moines, or Elder Hughes arranged for other itinerant exhorters to serve us, for Elder Johns often came to us from Boonsboro. Joshua Housework presided at the meeting-house services, intermittently, during the winter of 1851 and 1852. Jamie Woods, a young man of Scotch extraction and ministerial aspirations, came west in 1851. This young disciple acted as spiritual advisor and Sunday-school leader during the absence of Reverend Housework. He also cheerfully assisted the settlers in logging, rail-mauling or other heavy labor. So far as I know he did not receive any compensation for his services in church-work; although a minister's keep, such as it might be, always was assured.

The unusual wedding ceremony mentioned elsewhere, seemed to open the way for numerous pastoral calls on the Schultz family. Jamie began to pay court to Hulda Schultz, sister of the bride. Everybody in the settlement loved the young preacher, but Hulda said she did not think she was cut out for a minister's wife. Woods remained here about a year, and unfortunately for us, procured a pastorate in another location.

It is doubtful whether some of the early exhorters were authorized preachers, or the early lawyers authorized attorneys. They came and went in much the same way and if the practice was irregular no one objected.

Spiritually we were served occasionally, during the winter of 1852 and 1853, by Elder Kent and an exhorter named David Eckerson, with Judson Barkus as resident helper and Sunday-school superintendent. While Elder Kent traveled our district he met and married Mrs. Haviland, an early resident of Webster county who, compared with many other pioneers, was well provided with this world's goods. Elder Ezra Rathbun and Elder Jones also came from Des Moines at long intervals.

Attention to domestic and material interests made the trips of brother Kent less frequent and they finally ceased

altogether. Following Kent, Eckerson and Barkus were the regular circuit riders Montgomery, Skinner and Day, whom many of our town's people remember, along with the itinerants of the various religious denominations.

There was no sect or creed distinction in the early church work. If the ministers were listed or labeled no one seemed to know it. Assistance and advice seemed to be the purpose of the leaders and for a long time no denominational differences arose.

Second Public Meeting Place.

I attended Sunday-school services at the Stanley cabin, and there learned verses from the New Testament which was presented to me by granny Peabody, who periodically came to our cabin in the capacity of midwife.

The growth and attendance at both the sacred and secular services made it necessary to change the meeting place; so a building at Division and Union streets—a log dwelling occupied by the Wheeler family who kept a stock of supplies—was chosen. Day-school sessions also were held here with Mrs. Wheeler as teacher until another change was necessary.

Lawyers.

The summer of 1852 brought two young attorneys, Jasper Jackson and Joel Benton, who were seeking a location in our new country.

The first-named member of the proposed firm of "Jackson and Benton," declared himself to be a lineal descendant of the former president, Andrew Jackson. The claim of an illustrious progenitor, however, did not seem to impress the pioneers who were diligently striving to subdue nature and compel her to smile upon and approve personal effort.

Jackson and Benton were extremely bright and genial young men. They made some very excellent business suggestions which for the time were not followed. They advised against the slipshod methods of taking, staking, and

trading claims without record; they sought to show that it was unbusinesslike to assume a financial obligation without requiring a note or mortgage security; they warned us that the then prevailing "'pon honor" rule eventually would prove troublesome if not disastrous.

These law partners, who had been student chums, remained at our home nearly all summer. They made trips to Fort Dodge and Homer, in addition to visiting the various settlers about the country. Finally they decided that the settlements were too remote from each other for profitable work. They made the jesting remark as they departed for Dubuque: "If you succeed in locating a county seat we will return."

It elsewhere has been recorded that our family accepted no pay for entertainment of newcomers. The evening before their departure Jackson and Benton requested that the bill for board and lodging be prepared for them. They were assured that no charge would be made. They insisted, but the proffer of money resolutely was refused. The next morning they set out, afoot, upon their journey.

Dinner-time arrived. In the iron pot beside the fireplace we found a buckskin pouch containing three golden eagles; quite enough money at that time to have purchased the claim of a discouraged, home-sick settler.

The following spring Wesley Brown, a prepossessing but unassuming young man, with rather the manner of a minister than of a lawyer, came to us from a frontier town in Wisconsin. The young attorney walked the entire distance. In addition to his light clerical work, he willingly performed daily manual labor.

Brown remained until displaced by William Berkley, who went to Homer from Illinois in the fall of 1852, and later came to Newcastle. Berkley's assertive, aggressive personality marked a striking contrast from the quiet manner and conscientious work of his predecessors. He went into any case or game to win—for Berkley—and the success of a client or welfare of the community was incidental.

William Berkley remained in Newcastle for several years and prospered financially.

Doctors.

The full-fledged disciples of Aesculapius were not welcomed among us with the enthusiasm which promised remunerative returns, for it was difficult to displace the home-prepared roots-and-herbs remedies. Our first doctor was a young man named Lester Prentiss, who came from our old Indiana home in 1852, and stayed with us during the summer and fall.

The predisposition of people to be "taken sick" during the stormiest weather is proverbial. The change from short trips and comfortable methods of travel to long trips on almost impassable roads was very discouraging. Besides, in some families, male doctors were not popular. Competition, at that time, was not the life of trade nor could any division of profits be considered. The "old grannies" freely contributed their home-made dope and graciously threw in their services, so the young physician deserted our aspiring hamlet and returned to Indiana.

Doctor Prentiss was followed by Benjamin Hamilton, M. D., and Doctor Sterling. Both were elderly men, but were unsuccessful and did not remain permanently. Dr. DeTarr, of Boonsboro, occasionally was called to our settlement.

Doctors of medicine, for many years, ministered to the sick as an avocation while pursuing some other kind of work such as storekeeping, milling, drug-handling or tavern-keeping. Doctor Benedict, a man of worth and wisdom, supplemented his professional earnings by working as a day-laborer.

An army surgeon, Charles Keeney, was stationed at the military post in Fort Dodge, from 1850 to 1853, but I do not think he visited us professionally. As time passed the lists included doctors Baum, Cochran, Sage, Coyle, Jewel, Spears and others. Dr. Hampton Corbin, of Homer,

declared the country to be disgustingly healthful. The story still facetiously is told that at Hook's Point it was necessary to kill a man in order to locate a graveyard.

STAR POINT, A POTTAWATTAMIE.

CHAPTER VIII.

Indian Reciprocity.

We never were troubled with Indians, although bands of Pottawattamies must have broken camp shortly before our arrival. We found many newly cut coon trees along the river and fresh camp-fire ashes at various points.

Small numbers of Indians often came to our home and swapped supplies or sold canoes and trenchers—wooden dishes. They committed no depredations, however, nor did they evince any animosity at our presence. They were absolutely honest in dealing with our family and manifested a well developed degree of reciprocity. A case in point:

During the summer of 1850 Little Bill Brewer, who was to make a trip to Des Moines for supplies came up from Hope Hollow and requested that I keep his wife company during his absence. Permission was given and we began the trip on his pony. I rode sidewise behind my cousin and clung tenaciously to his knit galluses, for I was in continual danger of falling off backward and in momentary dread of pitching forward into the mud.

While the pony was laboring through a particularly bad portion of swamp a quartet of barebreasted Indians—one a boy about my own age—approached us upon the right. We drew rein and manifested our friendliness. They wanted to trade for tobacco but as my cousin had none with him the redskins accompanied us to his home and were supplied with the commodity.

The horse showed signs of fatigue from the trip and one of the braves dismounted, deftly lifted me from behind my cousin, placed me upon his own pony and the rest of the journey was made by this stalwart son of the plains walking beside his mount.

Before the visitors departed northward the moccasins, but newly worn by the Indian boy, were presented to me by "Star-Point." This name we concluded must be correct since he touched reverently, one by one, the points of a large crimson star tattooed upon his breast, and with fingers indicating the number of points he swept his hand toward the heavens.

The gift in itself was of little consequence; but I have remembered the occurrence as evidence of the untaught instinct of equitable exchange.

The third day after the departure of Little Bill for Des Moines, Star-Point and the young boy returned afoot. A deer had been killed and dressed by them. On a pole, the ends of which rested on the Indian's shoulders, was suspended by the feet the carcass which they wished to trade for tobacco. Finding my cousin away they indicated their desire to remain until his return. They jerked the venison which had been brought for our use, and at night slept on the ground outside the cabin door. During the following days they hunted and cured the game taken.

The wife of Little Bill was a young woman, and I a girl; but we did not think of being afraid of the Indians. Throughout the four days' sojourn they resigned themselves to the delay quite as a matter of course; and their repose of manner, their attitude of patient assurance, inspired confidence instead of fear.

Mail; Indian Hunters.

For some time the various settlers acted as mail-carriers. Whoever made a business trip to Des Moines, and later to Homer, brought the mail for any of the other families. The first mail-route was covered, alternately, by Amos Brewer and Jim Doty the early part of 1852. The same season Doty was elected sheriff. The carriers rode our horse to Des Moines at intervals of a few weeks, more or less, according to weather and condition of the trail.

The season "Long Tom" came into our possession he

was the heroic figure in a life-saving episode—or so his rider declared.

The day was mild and sunny and the tired mail-carrier must have dozed in his saddle as he crossed the prairie southwest of our settlement. As he came opposite a point of timber at about the Low Lawn farm, he was startled by five or six redskins who were camped in the shelter of the trees. They suddenly sprang forward gesticulating vehemently. The Indian vernacular sounded hostile to Amos; he did not wait for explanations but beat the ribs of "Long Tom" with his boot-heels, and the surprised animal made a record run for home.

A frightened backward glance by the fleeing carrier assured him that the savages had mounted their ponies and were in pursuit. This fact lent strength to the heels of the rider who spurred the energies of the excited horse. The mail-carrier was greatly disgusted when, soon after he reached home, the redskins rode into our yard and peaceably unfolded the account of a buffalo-hunt which had extended from the western borders of the state.

A bunch of seven animals had been separated from the herd; these were followed by the Indians who now sought our help to pursue and kill them.

Buffalo Hunt.

Jack was sent to notify Major Brassfield at Hook's Point. He was requested to take the trail where the Indians had camped, while our men were to take separate lines in a westerly direction and draw together at a designated camping-place. Early in the morning the Indians, my father, two brothers, Isaac Lyon and Sam Schultz began the buffalo-hunt.

The first day there was nothing to report except that the trail and grazing-place were located. It was agreed that the next day the horsemen should make a circuitous detour and turn, if possible, the buffaloes back toward the footmen. On the afternoon of the second day the bunch

of bison was located in what now is Webster county, at an old wallow where the animals had herded during the earlier years.

The Indians with their ponies were masters at the rounding-up and some of our hunters were expert as riflemen. A common expression was: "If Brewer or Brassfield draws a bead on game the critter is as good as dead." A racing buffalo, however, is not so easy to shoot. Evening was approaching before the sixth animal was killed; and the gathering darkness gave opportunity for the bull to escape, although he carried several musket-balls in his anatomy.

These buffaloes were, as far as I know, the only ones seen after our arrival. Two of them were shot by Major Brassfield; one each by my father and brother; the other two were killed by the Indians; and the redskins doubtless bagged the wounded bull on the way back to their hunting-ground.

When the town of Homer began to develop metropolitan aspirations a regular line of communication was established between that place and Newcastle; and "Long Tom" equipped with saddle-bags was ridden by Bob Turner who brought the mail from our friends in the East. When our town was officially platted, Rob Martin was named as postmaster.

Hardships of Mail Service.

Harris Hoover who several years later, was in the mail-service on the northern Iowa frontier, often recounted experiences in which he swam swollen streams, braved freezing blizzards, imperiled his life on ice-fields and daily faced the possibility of attack by wild beasts or Indians. The human animal invariably pressed into the breach and proved his endurance when the weather was too severe for a horse. One incident follows:

Hoover started afoot to cover his route on the north fork of the Des Moines river. The weather was bitterly

cold and the snow untracked except for the trails of wild animals. He kept to the river for guidance, although this course made the distance much greater.

For several hours a pair of wolves had been skulking along the river's bank and occasionally howled a hideous chorus as an accompaniment to his march. He started a fire at midday to thaw his frozen victuals. While resting and eating, the wolves were more obtrusive in their attentions. They came so closely upon him during the afternoon that he threw off his knapsack, loaded and primed his gun, and prepared to shoot at least one of the creatures and, perhaps, frighten the other away.

Two shots rang out from the river's bank before the carrier fired, and the wolves dropped dead in their tracks. Hoover held the rifle to his shoulder and awaited developments. Soon three Indians approached him from the right and indicated to him that they were hungry. They poured the contents of the mail-pouch upon the snow, but as it contained no food, replaced the letters and returned it to the carrier.

The white man divided his supply of jerked venison and corn-cake with the savages. They pointed out a short-cut across the prairie and, for many miles, trudged ahead of him through the deep snow to his destination. Hoover often expressed his gratitude for their friendliness and companionship at that time.

All Night in a Tree.

My brother, John Thomas, on one of his trips to the Bill Funk woods, was not so fortunate in locating himself as Roll had been on the trip to Homer. The boy set out with bow and arrows to hunt squirrels. The purpose of squirrel hunts was not to supply meat but to furnish light, unsalable skins for children's mittens which were made from the uncut skin with fur inside.

The bulldog, when not helping the hunting canines, was the boy's constant companion and accompanied him on this

trip. The young hunter kept within the river's range for some time but a frisky squirrel led him astray. Scanning the tree-tops instead of paying attention to the trail, he soon realized that he was lost so sat down to think it over.

He had no gun to discharge which might attract attention and no means of making a signal fire or lighting a torch. He could shout, but unless a searching party were near he could not be heard; and of course, no one would be alarmed at his absence, at least, until nightfall.

The lad tried to send the bulldog home but Lockjaw whined and refused to leave him. The dog's master never before had been so far from his mother and thought he never had seen such mammoth trees or so many of them. The sun was not visible but he continued the effort to locate himself by reaching the river or coming out on the prairie. The usual perverseness of confused travelers pursued him and he could not escape from the timber belt.

The evening shadows began to deepen and he knew he must spend the night in the woods. He dared not sleep on the ground for fear of being devoured by wolves. Lockjaw could have protected him from one member of almost any forest family, but the dog could not be relied upon to kill a pack.

An immense tree with low-growing limbs and a grapevine decoration was selected as the place for his night's vigil. He took off his wampus and arranged a band about the body of the dog just back of the fore-legs, and a slender grapevine was attached to the band. Retaining his hold on the free end of the vine, he climbed the tree and selected as comfortable a crotch as was available. The dog was hoisted to a crotch below the one selected for himself, and the two were located for the night.

Meanwhile, the family were wondering as bedtime approached why the youth did not return. An older hunter we did not look for until he arrived, no matter whether he was gone a day or a week. Nothing could be done however until morning, and we did nothing.

Morning came; but the boy did not. Jack was in-

structed to scout down one side of the river and Roll down the other side, keeping within shouting distance of each other. Father struck out south toward the trapping camp of a half dozen Indians which was located in the Biernatski bottom. He explained the reason for his visit. The redskins at once circled out into the forest with the air of confidence that meant the successful termination of the search. One of the squaws, an unsolicited assistant, signified her intention of canoeing up the river.

Daybreak had signalled John Thomas and Lockjaw from the tree. The boy decided from the early morning lighting of the heavens that his directions could be straightened. He, however, took the precaution of trimming twigs from the saplings along his course so someone could trail him if his calculations were incorrect.

He was making his way through the Briggs' timber about the middle of the forenoon, when he heard a prolonged whistle shrilled through the air. Joyfully he shouted a reply and ran in the direction of the sound. A few rods brought him to the river's brink where the squaw was patiently waiting. The lost was found; but he was not disposed to trust himself to the tender mercies of an unknown Indian woman. The bulldog, contrary to his usual unsociableness, immediately made friends with the squaw by frisking about, fawning at her feet, leaping into the canoe and bounding from the reluctant boy to the gesticulating canoeist with such apparent understanding of her good intentions that at length the lad decided to accompany her.

The long piercing whistle again was sounded. When camp was reached two of the bucks already had returned. A signal gun was fired. Soon another and another as answers from different directions, and two from the distant hunters up the river.

The squaws were so solicitous for the comfort of the lad that he feared they were going to keep him with the band. He was overjoyed, however, when pap pulled into camp. After the hungry boy and dog had been fed they

made good time toward home where Jack and Roll already had arrived. Jack had discovered the trimmed saplings and found the wanderer had crossed his own trail several times in his circuitous meandering. Eventually he would have been overtaken by his pursuers had not the search been terminated by the squaw.

John Thomas declared he could not be lost a second time; but as he lived to be but a few years older the opportunities for testing his assertion were not numerous.

Four members of our family were claimed by death within seven months: father, Jack, John Thomas and Julia Ann. My youngest sister, Mrs. F. L. Meeks, was born during this period of affliction.

Indian Guests.

Two Indian bucks enroute from Iowa City to Sioux City on government business stayed at our cabin all night. The evening was spent in explaining to the boys their method of reckoning time and counting. I still remember the numerals to ten, although I do not know the correct spelling or to which tribe division or tongue they belong.

The braves used many English words and were efficient in expressing their wishes by signs and sounds. Their twelve moons correspond to our calendar. The flower moon, corn moon, hunting moon and snow moon represent May, September, December and February respectively, with other subdivisions. Distance they measured by a day's journey on foot, and the time of day is noted by the sun's rising, its setting time, and noon mark. The balance of the day is sleeping time.

It is quite remarkable that prairie fires did not escape control and reach the forests in this locality, but there had been no fire damage to timber. The redmen were very careful when using the prairie fire method of corraling game. A band of Indians would encircle several miles of area heading game toward a central point. When within an agreed upon circular line the hunters, at a proper dis-

tance apart, would fire the grass and form a ring of back-fired surface. When the bare, burned space was completed the grass in the enclosure was ignited, burned toward the center and the game was caught within the flaming wall.

Numbers of the animals, seeking freedom, dashed through the fire only to be blinded, burned and finally shot by the Indians who were closing in on the suffocating creatures at the center of the fire-screen. The "fire-corral" method was a notoriously cruel one and only was practiced when the need for food was imperative. It was not thought to be sportsmanlike; besides, the buckskins were more or less damaged by the heat.

CHAPTER IX.

Platting of Newcastle, Improvements, Amusements.

Newcastle was located in the horseshoe bend of the Boone river because it was thought that nature's encircling arm of water guaranteed immunity from cyclones and disastrous storms.

Our family settled near the creek and river so the water supply for man and beast would be constant. The need for fishing-grounds also was considered, as well as the better chances for success in trapping and taking big game at their drinking-places.

Water-routes, moreover, furnished an easy warm weather method of transportation for produce. The frozen surface of a river, likewise, provided an unobstructed winter-highway. The woodman's troubles were reduced to a minimum by felling trees upon the ice for the well shod oxen easily could snake home the logs on its smooth surface.

The river as a natatorium also was a success. The idea seemed to prevail that summer swimming every day would equalize the long period of winter weather when swimming was impossible, so from fall until spring bathing activities were held in abeyance.

Then, too, the ever pressing problem of laundry work was solved more or less satisfactorily at the river's edge, and the fear of the periodically recurring prairie fire was allayed somewhat by the proximity of water.

The Town Plat.

Newcastle was laid out during the early summer of 1853, by my father, Wilson Brewer, and a nephew, Amos Brewer, who was a surveyor and had come west for the work at the solicitation of father.

The town was located on land owned by us on the NW. ¼ of the NW. ¼ of Section 6, Township 88, Range 25. The name, Newcastle, was a reminder of the old Virginia homestead, Highcastle-on-the-James. Father often referred to our town as Newcastle-on-the-Boone.

The recorder's books show that Newcastle was platted by Wilson Brewer and William Frakes, October 27, 1854; the surveyor named is S. C. Wood. Considerable time elapsed before the county seat was located at Newcastle. Correcting and later platting of additions may have confused the names of the surveyors and account for the mistake. As before stated, however, Amos Brewer was the surveyor of the original Newcastle plat.

The spring after the platting a part of the town site was traded to William Frakes, which may account for the additional error that the platting was done jointly by Wilson Brewer and William Frakes.

Months sometimes elapsed before property purchased by settlers was legally recorded. Hundreds of parcels of land—claims, town lots, or timber tracts—were swapped several times without legal record. Delaying transfer gave the traders and short-time holders opportunity to turn land without the bother and expense of legal routine. When record finally was made, if the intermediate dealers requested, their names were omitted from the deeds, and the documents showed only the names of the original holders and the latest purchasers.

Political Possibilities; Father's Trip East.

The political pot already had begun slowly to seethe. The shrewd, far-seeing men in the aspiring towns of Homer and Fort Dodge began early to organize their forces and secure settlers for their sections of country.

Foreseeing that a contest for political supremacy was inevitable, the leaders in our community realized the necessity for a concerted movement to procure additional settlers for the Boone valley. A Fourth of July gathering

accordingly was arranged and the celebration was held in an oak grove on what now is Second street, west of Prospect.

A committee of the whole, after discussing means and methods, decided that Wilson Brewer should visit adjoining states to the east of us for the purpose of interesting and securing settlers. Nels Omstead said: "No one but Wils was willing to assume the hardships of the journey."

Father set out upon the trip the middle of July, 1853. The few days of preparation was a depressing period for the family. We were accustomed to delays of travel in hunting, prospecting and marketing, but this proposed long journey seemed quite different. When the time for final goodbys arrived the boys were not to be found; only mother, myself and the babies were left to speed him on his way. Not a word was spoken and no tears were shed; to have ventured speech would have meant complete surrender of self-control, and a manifestation of weakness when courage was necessary would have marked the crowning humiliation of a pioneer.

I felt that this parting removed something vital from my life and I admit after this lapse of years, that I often sought the solitudes and cried, and cried. I now believe my loneliness arose from the premonition of the journey my father so soon was to take "from which no traveler returns." Not once during his absence, however, did I find my mother in tears.

The months sped away. One beautiful sunny day late in the fall, the boys rushed into the cabin shouting: "Pap's coming! Pap's coming!" Mother suddenly sat down. The tension of anxiety was removed and the tears flowed freely.

Father covered the trail on foot to Iowa City from whence he took a jerkie, or stage, via. Burlington, Iowa, through Illinois to the old Indiana home. At many of the towns visited he employed agents to influence emigrants to come to our Boone valley settlement. He endeavored to induce parties who were already on the road to other locali-

ties to change their course, and he visited personally anyone who was reported to have the western fever.

The town-agency method turned many settlers in our direction, among them the Funk brothers, and through correspondence Talman Wiltsey decided to take up the far-west trail. Sam Bates and party were met on the road and their course changed from Missouri to our Iowa settlement. Bates, later, traded for our home farm and was instrumental in securing many additions to our numbers. The Wilson brothers who already had seen the star in the west, arranged to cast their lot with us as soon as their Badger state holdings could be sold. Walt and Sum came out and located late in '54, and moved among us the next spring.

Father reached the eastern limit of his journey in six weeks and soon began the return trip. He worked through Illinois, stopped at Chicago, made many Wisconsin points, followed the northern Iowa trail, visited Hewitts and Dickinsons at Clear Lake, and made his way back to Newcastle.

The tour extended over fourteen weeks and pap arrived home late in the season. The outcome of the trip gave very gratifying results. During the following two years there was such an inflow of settlers that the future of our city seemed assured although other sections of the country, also, were receiving their quota of newcomers.

Improvement Activities.

There was a continuous round of chopping and logging-bees throughout the winter to prepare material for building purposes. Father was kept busy locating claims, advising for business ventures and improvement, and in swapping land to satisfy any disgruntled settler. He arranged to furnish material for house, store and mill building, while some of the new arrivals furnished cash for the equipment and operation of enterprises.

The present-day rapid methods of land-seekers and promoters doubtless would have turned the heads of our pioneer immigration agents although they were not slow in

grasping the situation. Funk brothers and Talman Wiltsey not only bought land for speculation but they loaned money at 24 per cent interest. Nels Omstead declared he borrowed money at 40 per cent, and profited on the deal. The enterprises of the Wilson brothers form a large part of the town's later history and are too well known to require repetition.

It has been reported that in many Iowa towns bankers bought government land on time at $1.25 per acre, and sold for $1.75. It then was up to them to dispose of the "stump-tail," "brindle-pup" or "wild-cat" currency.

Store and Tailor Shop.

Immediately after father's return from the East a log store-building was built at Superior and Bank streets and a stock of merchandise was dispensed to customers by Amos Brewer; within a few months, however, the goods were sold to Fritz Snyder. A tailor, Tom Thorpe, had a counter in this store. A hewed log store was erected in 1854, on First street, east of Superior, and Joe Wheeler had charge of the emporium until it was taken over by Lockwood, and later by Paine; after which a second structure was joined to the first and the double log building became a combination store and tavern.

The staples carried by all early supply-stations were: tea, coffee, tobacco, ammunition and whisky. Goods were swapped for hides, furs, venison, wool or any produce which could be disposed of in Des Moines or Iowa City. Whisky, in addition to being sold at stores was dispensed at taverns and often was kept by private families in keg or barrel lots. The domestic supply, however, was for neighborly distribution.

Liquor was served at early gatherings from a pail with dipper or gourd, free to all unless there were a voluntary expense contribution. Whisky sold from twenty-five to fifty cents a gallon and was about equal in strength to a yoke of oxen. Occasionally a man drank to excess but it

was the exception instead of the rule. It was quite as common for the men-folk hospitably to pass the whisky-flask to one another at a camp meeting as at a political gathering.

Talman Wiltsey and wife and the Beach brothers came west at the same time. They stayed with our family until their cabins could be built during the summer of 1854, after which time Wiltsey kept supplies and entertained many travelers and newcomers. The cabin later was used as a stable. The Beach brothers, Dave, Than and Ben, located and built on their claims in the west part of town. Their house also was a stopping place for land-lookers. Almost every cabin served as a tavern on a small scale.

Tom Thorpe, our first tailor, made a suit of clothes for my nineteen year old brother. It was his first store suit and cost nine dollars; a part of the payment was made in venison. The vest material was black satin with red flowers in relief. Following the regulation homespun and hickory it furnished a notable contrast as a splendid specimen of sartorial art, and accentuated the expression of nature's method of attracting the opposite sex by the display of beautiful colors. Other young men were equally prodigal in personal adornment; the Schultz and Lyon boys being the possessors of hand-embroidered waistcoats.

There were, likewise, within the ranks of the older men many fancy jerkins in evidence at evening gatherings. I believe Norval Hellen was the alleged leader for novelty along this line. The prize garment was made from the skin of a pet calf. The brown and white mottled calfskin vest and the shining plug hat worn by Hellen, will be remembered by many as the distinguishing marks of his apparel. Doeskin vests were quite common.

The hat worn by my father was a stiff model about half the height of the sik tile of today. This was the regulation summer head-piece for men who did not wear straw-platts. John Maxwell had no time for tailors. He declared his wife made him a pair of trousers from a perfectly good strip of striped hemp carpet. Nels Omstead asserts that knee-britches made from a couple of grain sacks can't be

beaten for wear or for looks when worn by one of slender, graceful build, especially when the rope puckering-string is knotted into a bow and hangs outside the boot-tops.

Third Meeting Place.

Immediately after the removal of Joe Wheeler's mercantile stock to First street, as recorded elsewhere, the day and Sunday-school sessions were transferred to the residence now owned by Maggie L. Smith, on Bank street, between Wilson avenue and Seneca street. The building was erected in 1854 as a public meeting place. Amos Brewer acted as schoolmaster until the change was made to the Shipp property on Division street. The ministerial circuit-riders mentioned in another chapter did some work at this point, but by this time denominational grouping was advancing.

I have followed the line of public meetings thus far only because it had not been before made clear from the early years. The town's political history from 1852 is well known. It has been well written by others. I only will state that the counties of Yell and Risley were united in 1853 and called Webster. Father was active in the effort to subdivide Webster county and establish the county-seat at Newcastle. The general assembly of Iowa convened in Iowa City and approved, December 1856, the bill to divide the county of Webster and create the new county of Hamilton with our village established as the countyseat. Father died a few days before this legislative approval of our political plans. He, however, had had no previous knowledge of an effort to change the name of the town. He died unaware of the fact that Newcastle, which he had founded, and named, and loved, passed out of existence as his own life ebbed, and Webster City came into existence in its stead.

Pioneer Amusements.

Superior street, the main thoroughfare, was laid out wider than the others and was to be used as a race course.

It permitted a long, straight stretch of track from the present location of the Illinois Central railway tracks on the north, to Brewer's creek on the south. Many fast "hosses" have been ridden over this speedway.

Horse-racing and bowery dancing were the usual amusements at public pioneer gatherings. The eastern exposure of the Wilson avenue hillside between Walnut and Pleasant streets served as a natural amphitheater for witnessing the horse races. No residences obstructed the view and settlers from miles around attended the sports.

Of course, there were always the discussions of the present and future possibilities or "hosses" entered—their build and blood, their gait and weight, their age and achievements. There was, invariably, the "hoss" that NEARLY wins, and his disgruntled owner. I suppose there never was a pioneer horse-race where money or its equivalent did not change hands by betting. Most pioneer preachers were "hoss-fanciers." Elder Housework was a notable example. He would abandon a ministerial trip if racing dates could not be arranged to accommodate him. Major Brassfield would travel miles to be present at a race. I do not know whether his horses ever won money or not, but I do know that he kept racers as long as he lived. His bay mare or grey geldin' and his sorrel or "claybank hoss" at least were winners in their talking points when explained by the owner. The members of our family, likewise, were admirers of good horse flesh but I do not remember that they were very successful in picking winners.

The sport of dog-fighting occasionally was indulged, and canine points were quite as enthusiastically extolled as those of the equine family. Wrestling always was staged with numerous contestants. A mat referee of today would have had a bad time deciding a pioneer "rassel." It was not unusual for the winner to settle the losers by fighting them in the street.

Foot-racers and the hop-skip-and-jump champions always were in evidence with the usual wordy accompaniment, and the records detailed—at this distance—would

make the present-day pole-vaulter or modern marathon champion look to his laurels. Shooting-matches usually were side-issues. They were not so generally amusing as the sports and drew only the small bunch of "dead-shots" or aspiring riflemen.

The test of ox-strength was a frequent diversion. A lizard was loaded with "nigger-heads" and the contesting yokes of cattle alternately tried out. The winners, of course, pulled the heaviest load.

The ox "tug-o'-war" was a strenuous proceeding. The two yokes were headed in opposite directions and the pulling chains fastened to heavy beam double-trees. It was necessary for one yoke of cattle to pull the other yoke backward ten feet in order to win the contest.

The exhibition was an exciting one. If a chain gave way the oxen pitched head-foremost to the ground and the free end of the log chain became a dangerous weapon. John Butler's oxen and our yoke of bulls usually were the best bets. The cattle were so evenly matched that the loss of a pull by either yoke was attributed to a "leetle" too much excitement.

Bowery Dance; Picnic Dinners.

The early bowery dance was held in any natural grove chosen by the entertainers. The ground was smoothed and rolled until it was firm, then swept clean for the dancing surface. Later, platforms were laid and pole frames supported the cut greenery of vines and branches.

Anyone who wished to dance was at liberty to do so and the women accepted the invitation of any man who solicited their assistance—whether the partners were quite agreeable to them or not. There were wall flowers in the olden days; not from neglect, however, but because the girls did not care to dance. The fact that a girl could not dance was no excuse. She was unceremoniously inducted into the cotillion and soon learned from actually executing the figures.

A pleasant anticipation was the picnic dinners served at Independence Day or other summer "getherin's." We did not have the culinary delicacies or pastry creations which were served later but everybody dined as a big family and visited with all the settlers. When the big circular spread of tablecloths was made on the ground and the victuals placed, the children were not told to go back and wait—as was the case when there was company at home; but they were treated with, at least, a semblance of the deference shown to children today.

Pioneer children were not, however, in the predicament of a recent writer whose childhood's lines were cast in the period of "waiting till the second table." He declares that until he was grown he did not know there were any parts to a chicken except the neck and back. In the "airly" days the supply of cooked chicken or wild fowl was limited only by the capabilities of the cooks in preparing them.

No, we did not have frosted cake and ice cream but we did have salt risin' bread with jam spreadin' and berry pie which was quite good enough for us.

Conversing with Joth Lyon a short time before his death he said of the early picnics: "Eating with the grown-ups was a treat, and sprawling on the ground while doing it was equal to two treats. It was sure-enough fun to be told by the heads of families to: 'jest sail right in everybody; retch and help yourselves and don't be bashful.' Yes, there was some difference from the home method of standing stiffly at the table, having the plate for two to eat from, filled with victuals you didn't want and be told to clean it up before you could have any more—well, Sairy, they were good old times, anyway."

Snap and Ketch 'Em.

Some games were played at all early dancing parties—usually kissing games. "Snap-and-ketch-'em" furnished about as strenuous exercise as the "jig-time" dances. A couple sat on chairs in the middle of the room with arms

interlocked and chairs braced. A girl snapped her fingers at a young man and the fun started. Around and around the center couple they ran the girl dodging, ducking and evading the clutch and doubling tactics of the speeding pursuer.

The sprinting qualities were well tested amid the cheers and jeers, the titters and tee-hees and the smart sallies of the crowd before the victim—perhaps purposely slowing down —finally was captured. At this interesting point the young man's troubles often had just begun. The forfeit of a kiss for the catching was contested quite as energetically as the race had been. There was uproarious laughter and such encouraging expressions from the on-lookers as: "Kiss 'er, Bill!" "Look-ee, he can't do it," "Do you want some help, Bill?" "Liza Jane's too much for 'im," "Don't do so much foolin', the rest o' us want a chance."

The performance proved the endurance and persistence of both contestants and the tussel ended only with the voluntary surrender of the girl or taking the kiss by the exercise of adroit generalship or the application of superior strength.

An anemic, white-livered young man could not have passed muster with pioneer girls, and he would have been made miserable as the butt of constant ridicule by both boys and girls. To gain favor men had to be able—not to say anxious—to take their part at play or work, and in self—or family defense.

"Getherin's."

The announcement that a neighbor was to have a "getherin' " did not mean he was scheduled for an abscess in some portion of his anatomy. When we heard Uncle Peter Lyon or Aunt Nancy Stanley was to have a "getherin'," we knew there was to be a party of some kind—usually a dance.

There were periods, after settlement was somewhat advanced, when "getherin's" were announced for nearly

every night in the week either near home, at Homer, Hook's Point, Fort Dodge, Liberty, Mineral Ridge or Marshalltown and the attendants thought no more of making the trip in lumber wagons, bob-sleds, on horseback or afoot, than we do today of an excursion on the train.

My two brothers, Jack and Roll, were frequent attendants. Jack never danced a step in his life, but Roll would dance every night if the opportunity presented itself. He told of an occasion when he walked from Batch Grove to Homer to attend a dance. Starting in the morning, two deer were shot on the way to Newcastle. The skins were removed and carried home where he arrived for dinner and the journey to Homer was resumed early in the afternoon.

The dancing party disbanded after daylight the next morning, and Roll, with a couple of companions reached home about two o'clock P. M. They were preparing to retire when word reached us that Major Brassfield was to have a "getherin' " at his home near Liberty. The boys at once made ready for the trip on our horse and two borrowed ponies.

The water was high. They rode off the bank of the river at about the Weedman place and reached the opposite bank in safety. Swimming the river would not have been necessary as they could have circled the bend and reached their destination without crossing at all, but the north trail was thought to be better. Roll declared that but for the tall grass and bushes waving and striking him in the face he would have gone to sleep riding along the way.

They arrived at the Major's about dusk and were cordially greeted by the host who casually remarked: "Boys, maybe you will see a fracas before this dance is over." The boys immediately were all attention, but the Major merely said: "Just wait and see."

There were several young men from the Fort Dodge district who had been attending neighborhood parties and became unduly hilarious and boisterous in their manner. The Major decided the way to preserve order was to nip

disorder in the bud and he delegated himself a committee of one to do the nipping. He announced the "getherin' " a week in advance. The night arrived and the expected disturbers appeared.

The dance progressed to midnight and the Fort Dodgers began to talk loud and repeat the words of the fiddler as he "called off" the cotillion changes. Half jokingly they tried to trip the visitors, made sport of the missteps of the dancers and systematically sought to annoy them.

The Major walked up to the burliest of the bunch, took hold of the shoulder of the offender and forcibly faced him about. "See here, young man," said he, "I never have struck a man without giving him warning what to expect, but I never warn a man the second time. You behave while you are in my house or you go out of it to the buryin'-ground, and the rest of your crowd will go the same way if they interfere."

His grip of steel, his powerful frame and the glint in his eye evidently impressed the disturbers for they answered not a word. The Major continued: "I'm goin' to attend every "getherin' " in this neighborhood this season and I'm goin' to be in the same mind I am tonight. I never draw a bead on anything but once! I never strike anyone but once! I never warn anyone but once!" He folded his arms across his breast and quietly requested the musician to resume his work. The dance progressed without further interruption and the neighbors were relieved of the anxiety of possible future trouble.

It often was necessary for pioneers to act as their own policemen. They never shirked the responsibility and usually performed the work—at least to their own satisfaction.

Pole Swings.

Pole swings were about as freely patronized as the present hazardous sports of the amusement parks. Poles, say fifteen feet long, were peeled and dressed to about three or four inches in diameter. Two clevis-shaped bands of

iron were fitted over a strong limb and bolted to the upper ends of the poles. When the lower ends were put through holes in a piece of puncheon and secured with wooden pins the swing was ready for operations.

Swings were made wide enough for two persons to sit side by side but that line was not often followed. Permitting a man to pull a rope attached to the seat, or allowing some one to "run under" the swingers was too tame and inactive for full-grown, healthy pioneers. Only the very old or the very young were given assistance.

The usual method was: two venturesome candidates stood up in the swing facing each other. They were given a start or took a running start for themselves. As the swaying poles reached the farthest point of vibration, the person representing the higher body bent his knees, leaned backward and pushed until the point of equilibrium was passed, when his body gradually assumed the upright position. On the return swing of the poles the opposite person duplicated the action of the first.

The resistance soon was overcome and the participants were becoming acquainted with the treetops. The two who could "work themselves up" to the point of describing the lower half circle, or force the swing to a horizontal with the limb to which it was fastened were thought to be both muscular and courageous.

When the exertion of the swingers ceased the slowing down began. If the couple were a young man and a young woman, they usually sat down facing each other and "let the old cat die" quite as poetically—or prosaically—as young people do today; unless some strong-armed joker succeeded in catching the flying rope starter and jerking the occupants from their seat.

Pole swings were maintained for a long time in the grove west of Prospect and north of Second street, also north of the Illinois Central railway tracks and in the woods south of Brewer's creek.

Dances.

I remember very well the first dance I ever attended away from home. It was at the cabin of a neighbor on what now is the F. D. Young farm south of town. My brothers and I walked the entire distance and enjoyed the recreation, notwithstanding the fact that the road led through hazel-brush, gooseberry thickets, fields of Spanish-needles and begger-lice burs.

Father had brought to me from Des Moines a light calico dress and some red ribbon for neck and hair. My mother finished the dress for the dance, and the costume was quite a change from the homespun and home-dyed daily apparel. The outfit was given to me as a reward for working in the field during father's absence on his trip to the fort.

The young lads of the neighborhood and the bachelors who attended dances, mutton-tallowed their boots and ordered fried pork for supper the evening before a "shin-dig" so they might ham-gravy their hair into subjection. The work usually was so well done that the foreheads and necks of the subjects shone with grease throughout the evening. Laundering the bed clothes was a progressive problem since a thorough hair-greasing usually lasted from one dance date to another.

The hair-oiling with many families, in addition to the beautifying process, served a further purpose of reducing the activities of vermin to the extent, and in the proportion of generosity and frequency of the application. The families unafflicted with the scalp-disturbers assumed that a "preventive is better than a cure," so followed the fashion.

Anointing the head was common to both young men and young women, and a grease-spot on the shoulder of a hickory shirt told the same tale that a powder-patch on the Prince Albert coat tells today.

Dancing Costumes.

My father and mother did not dance but they were enthusiastic entertainers. The evening the Beach brothers arrived in town they attended a party at our house.

The boys became hilarious as they viewed the barn-door breeches worn by father. The homespun material having been used for some time, had bagged and worn at the knees. My mother, with frugal instinct, had cut off the legs of the garment close to the body; then exchanged the legs, turned them "hind side before" and resewed. This brought the baggy knee-places to the back of the legs and gave the appearance of going in one direction while facing in another.

Working trousers were always close-fitting and high-ankle length. This particular pair having been worn, shrunk and re-seamed soon were seeking the acquaintance of the wearer's calves; but he was undisturbed by the humorous sallies and joined heartily in the merriment at his own expense. The easterners, however, very soon grew accustomed to the eccentricities of necessity.

The appearance of short-legged "pants" was changed somewhat by Jake Funk, Mike McGonigle, Tom Bonebright and others who tucked their abbreviated jeans into their boot-tops. Notwithstanding the popularity of cowhide boots for parties, they were not always in evidence at dancing functions. Among others, John Lyon usually "tripped the light fantastic" without foot-covering. He claimed the "pigeon-wing" figure only could be executed properly when barefooted.

Nels Omstead attended a dance at Homer. Numbers of the guests remained all night and as sleeping accommodations were short he stood with his back to the fireplace and dozed. When daylight arrived Nels found the trousers' legs where they covered his calves were scorched to a crisp and fell into holes when touched, so the grain-sack adornment, mentioned elsewhere, became his Sunday best.

Brad Mason was the Beau Brummel of social gatherings. He wore kid pumps which he had brought from

Boston and his many fancy dancing steps were the wonder and envy of old and young. His brother, Frank, however, often grasped the overhead beams with his hands and did the double-shuffle in boots which he declared had been made over the end of an ox-yoke.

Frank Mason, on his first visit at our house, with true Bostonian courtesy selected the daughter of the family—myself—as his partner. He never tired of telling how he enjoyed that evening and he often related the circumstances to my children and grandchildren. Frank declared in his inimitable way, that Johnnie-cake and pumpkin-butter with parched-corn coffee served as refreshments at the entertainment; the account has been the standing joke among the town's-folk for many years.

Walt Wilson's chosen habiliments for a summer social were a straw hat and a long linen duster over his every day clothes. He outclassed the barefooted dancers by wearing socks to protect his feet from the roughness of puncheon floors. Walt never missed a "hop" unless he was sick; and in his own home he and his wife were splendid entertainers.

Jake Funk gallantly, although unconcernedly, accepted the attentions of the young women. Attired in cotton jeans trousers and his "coat of many colors"—so designated because of the patching and repatching which had made the original material invisible—he was a conspicuous figure. Rube Bennett and Nate Prime wore skin-tight trousers which obviated the necessity for knit gallus supports. Many youths in our locality rolled their "britches" legs above the boot tops. An attendant often was made uncomfortable if the jokers discovered "a letter in the post office" and the victim soon made his escape.

The young hunters of the '50's, for cold weather parties, prided themselves in the possession of buckskin breeches. While these garments were not so ornamental as the Wild-West ranch styles they certainly were picturesque in pattern and unique in decoration. The coonskin

caps—plucked or unplucked—were immense in size and topped a shock of hair, which if unoiled, might compare favorable with that of the biblical temple razer.

For winter trips the deerskin wampus with sheepskin collar was a wonderful wind excluder. Blanket-shawls were worn for many years by the older men. It was not uncommon for the regular bed-blanket to be utilized as a shawl, and the home-woven coverlet was deemed a fancy and desirable lap-robe.

I wish the motion picture artist could have reproduced from the original, one of those old-time "hoe-downs" at which the men kicking, stamping and genuflecting rivaled the antics of Indian dancers. The bashful girls dressed in linsey-woolsey, the sedate women in five-foot hoop-skirts and balloon sleeves, were swung 'round half a dozen times by their partners with such force and velocity that only occasionally did their feet touch the floor.

The fiddler, who carried his Stradivarius in a meal-sack, tuned his instrument and shouted to the company: "Git yer pardners fer a cuttillyun!" While keeping time with feet, head and body he sang along with his music something like this:

First four forward, and side four divide,
Change partners in center, and swing to the side.
and keep on around.

First two to right, and bow to the ground,
Bird in the cage, and three hands around;
and balance you all.

Ladies to right, and gents Highland Fling,
Make him a bow, and cheat him or swing;
and al a man left.

Ladies to center, and gents walk around,
Pass by your partners, and swing 'em around;
and all promenade.

On to the next one, salute and sashay,
And double a shuffle, the old-fashioned way;
and grand right and left.
First four to right, and gents do se do,
Half right and left, and ladies do so;
and all hoe it down.

Ladies to center, form star with hands four,
Left hand to partner, and do it some more;
grand right and left,
and all run away—
SEATS.

Women's Head-Wear.

Winter head-gear for women was the home-made hood, knitted scarf, nubia or cloud. A blanket shawl was used for heavy muffling. The slat sunbonnet was worn in summer and for a quarter of a century no new design or modification of the old one was made. Home-platted straw hats for girls and close-fitting straw bonnets for the elderly women were the Sunday rule.

The slat sunbonnet usually hung flatly and loosely suspended by the strings upon the wearer's back instead of being worn on the head—especially after the victim was out of sight of Mam's watchful eyes. Whatever could be said in favor of its appearance the sunbonnet was an obstruction to sight and an impediment to hearing, hence, our disinclination to wearing it.

The season, in springtime, when the boys donned their new straw hats was jestingly declared to be the indication for a "wet spell." The wetting which sent the straw-crown into a skyward peak and the rim into a shoulder droop, also affected the slat-sunbonnet. Although the slats were thin wooden strips the water warped them out of shape and it was a question whether the head-wear of boys or girls was in the lead in regard to looks.

Bright-colored sunbonnets with circular cape, buttoned-on crown, and ruffle-edged head-piece which was profusely

corded with candle-wicking, and starched to the stiffness of sheet steel superseded the old black slat-sunbonnet, and were thought to be very artistic.

Shakers were an unusual innovation. These head-pieces were of finely woven straw fashioned into a tube-shaped affair about fifteen inches in length, and a trifle greater in circumference than the common stovepipe. One end was woven closed. Placed horizontally, the under surface of about six inches in width was cut away so the shaker slipped on from the back of the head and fitted closely against the wearer's chignon. The extra length of tubing extended beyond the face and seemed to have been designed to prevent women looking in any direction except straight ahead.

The shaker was trimmed with a couple of cloth bands across the straw crown and a fifteen inch linen skirt which fell about the wearer's shoulders. The color of the trimming was black, or at least, neutral. Bright colors for hats or clothing were discouraged and often severely censured.

The flare-faced poke bonnet marked the extreme opposite from the shaker, and was a humming-bird in comparison with this inartistic and uncomfortable crown-piece.

A distinctive head-dress for a few years, was worn by young matrons. Assuming the responsibilities of wifehood automatically acquired the right—or perhaps the obligation—to wear a lacy, frilled, white cap either covering the top and back of the head or circling the face and tying under the chin. One of the most beautiful memory pictures of my mother is one in which she wore her fluffy white cap.

The custom of cap-wearing for women soon was discontinued; the reason perhaps was a scarcity of the proper material for their making. Old grannies, however, wore caps, but the color of cloth and trimming was limited to the quantity and kind on hand—usually neutral or black. The members of some families wore night-caps but ours did not.

Hair always was dressed very plainly. It was smoothed down over the ears and fastened at the back of the head

with a tucking comb, which sometimes was of immense size. If curls were worn and side-combs used, a style admired was the plain shell-band with a row of white button-like decorations. The hair of young girls was bobbed a long neck-length and held back from the face with a circle comb or a strip of cloth. This "bobbing" process was almost identical for the men but they parted the hair at an angle of forty-five degrees and tucked the ends under, forming a roll about the ears and neck.

Bloomers; Dresses.

The first pair of bloomers I ever saw were brought to Newcastle in 1852. The unusual style for women had been introduced in the East a season or two before and was worn here by a refined and cultured young woman named Martha Bellville.

The costume was more picturesque than the bloomer-suits of today. The skirt reached only to the knees, and the narrow-legged pantalets extended a little more than midway between the knees and ankles. When we compare the six foot hoopskirt and these abbreviated, narrow bloomers the contrast is quite marked, but Martha wore the garments at home and in public.

Miss Bellville married Brint Webster, a pioneer of Newcastle. He died within a few years. Mrs. Webster visited me at my home in Webster City about 1897. She was earning a livelihood in public work and wore the regular style of dress for women.

The year's gown-list for a girl usually included a linsey-woolsey dress with blue, yellow or brown checks for winter. Linsey-woolsey dresses never wore out. One had to outgrow them before another was provided. The skirt was tucked and could be lengthened as one grew tall, but as the body expanded the waist and sleeves became vice-like in their grip. The arm covering receded to the elbows and the buttons were torn from their moorings before the garment was handed down to the next of kin in the female line.

Two factory—coarse muslin—dresses were provided for summer wear. Originally white, one of these dresses was dyed black with logwood, or a dark brown with the juice from walnut hulls or bark. The other was dyed yellow with copperas. Variety in colors for sheepskin robes and chair cushions, and for carpet stripes were obtained by combining bluing dye with copperas for a handsome green in lights or darks as the strength of the dye permitted. Dyed material "set" with chamber-lye was declared to be "fast" colors. The pioneers' dye-pots were almost as indispensable as the stew-kettles for nearly all weaving and knitting stock was hand-dyed.

When denim came into use, blue and brown denim dresses were provided for girls. For Sunday wear they were quite scrumptious in style with two or three bias factory stripes, hand-stitched, about the lower circumference of the skirt and two stripes over the shoulders. The denim of fifty years ago also wore indefinitely.

A young woman's wardrobe was unusually well supplied if it contained a figured delaine or merino gown for party wear. My first delaine dress was purchased at Meservey's store in Homer. The ground weave was a dark purple over which meandered a bright green vine profusely supplied with yellow berries. The dress was made with a close-fitting waist and full skirt; but the combination of colors or quaint dressmaking did not discourage the attentions of Johnnie Prime, an account of whose trip as my escort is related elsewhere.

Wadded and quilted petticoats undoubtedly were designed for comfort but they were the embodiment of inartistic heaviness and the end of the limit for inefficiency. Instead of serving the purpose of warmth the wearer's nether limbs were half frozen beneath its balloon-like expanse. It had, notwithstanding, one redeeming feature. When outgrown it could be slit open and used as a bed-pad or for a horse blanket.

Young children kept pretty close to nature during the summer months, the encumbrance of clothing being but a

home-woven, tow-cloth shirt, knee length. Mud and water did not soil or damage shoes and stockings that were not worn, and the absence of underwear reacted favorably on the laundry list. Children were not alone in their lack of the last named item of apparel for grown-ups were not handicapped with an over-supply of underclothing.

My First Beau.

The White-Fox school house was built in 1854, and Josie Middleton chosen as teacher. Many revival meetings were held at White-Fox and the attendants usually made the trip on foot. I have walked to the meetings scores of times with my girl chums.

It was from a White-Fox gathering that Johnnie Prime, my first beau, escorted me home. On the memorable occasion we dropped behind the crowd of pedestrians to escape their joking remarks. While too bashful to converse we pursued our way along the brush-lined road approaching the river.

Suddenly we were startled—at least I was—by what seemed to be the bark of wolves a short distance ahead of us. We hurried along hoping to pass the danger zone in safety. The yelps from the adjacent thickets seemed so close that, momentarily, we expected to be attacked. Perhaps I was too frightened to scream for help from the company ahead of us or perhaps I was hoping Johnnie could beat the beasts single-handed; anyway, I waited for my escort's initiative.

The young man drew his bowie-knife and we hastened onward. Having gained the last clump of underbrush near the river I drew a breath of relief when from the dark thicket at our very heels sprang two creatures on all fours. Involuntarily I screamed with fright but Johnnie was game and sprang upon one of the objects with murderous intent. The practical jokers sidestepped the attack and a roar of laughter signalled the company at the river's bank who were awaiting the outcome of the joke on us.

Names.

The wife and husband of the family commonly were called "mam" and "pap"; but they spoke of each other as "my man" and "my woman." To designate father from son, the former was called "old" and the latter by the first name as: "Old" Prime and John; or they were called the first names as: "Nate" Prime and John.

Tallman, Maria and 'Gene represented the Wiltsey family. Maria was pronounced Ma-ri, as two syllables with the long sound of "i" accented. Later the use of given names declined somewhat and the family name as: "Pray," "Stoddard," "Johnson" became popular.

"Grandpap" and "granny" were the names applied to aged members of the family although no disrespect was intended in so naming them. We familiarly spoke of "Grandpap" and "Granny" Frakes; and the same designations applied to Joe Peabody and wife. The old doctor-women likewise, were called "granny." Our two early midwives were "Granny" Prime and "Granny" Peabody.

Nearly every family, doubtless with the desire to express affection, called two of its small members "Bubby" and "Sissy." These diminutives gradually were shortened to "Bub" and "Sis," and the baptismal name finally was applied.

Middle-aged neighbors often were called "uncle" and "aunt" whether or not any blood relationship could be traced. "Aunt Nancy" and "Uncle Billy" were the names applied to the Stanleys. "Aunt Peggy" and "Uncle Peter" were recognized as father and mother of one of the Lyon families. "Uncle Jakey" and "Uncle Ike" referred respectively to Paine and Lyon.

"Mam" and "pap" gave place as time passed to "maw" and "paw"; later these titles were shortened to "ma" and "pa"; still later they were trimmed to the infantile appellations "mama" and "papa." These now have been superseded by "mother" and "daddy." Recently a college professor has recommended that children call their

parents by the given names. This educator also favors calling children by their real names, such as: Margaret Ann, Jerusha Jane, Jonathan Peter or Samuel Jacob, instead of the widely applied and meaningless misnomers, dear, darling and sweetheart.

CHAPTER X.

Modes of Traveling.

The pleasures of ox-team and prairie-schooner traveling and pathfinding have been mentioned in an account of the long emigration-trip from Indiana. For shorter distances walking was the pioneer method of travel. My father and brothers, Major Brassfield, William Russell and others made many trips to Des Moines afoot.

Occasionally two men traveled together but more often one person made a solitary pedestrian journey except for those habitual companions, the dog and gun. The round-trip to the capitol city was not made in a day as at present, but with favorable conditions about eight days were required.

Immediately after the land-office opened in Des Moines father made a footback pilgrimage on the settlers' sacred mission of entering land. While at the fort he purchased a second horse, and the return trip was made on horseback. The price paid for the animal was two hundred dollars. He was tall, rawboned, and today would be called a "corn-crib" but his endurance was phenomenal. The horse was named Long Tom, and several years afterward he was traded to Reverend Skinner for a small racing mare. The circuit rider recognized the advantage of long legs for slough-wading while the corn-crib capabilities were tried out in the fields of the minister's parishioners. At this early day horse-racing or betting on races or elections did not discredit a preacher. He could accept a meal of victuals or a glass of toddy with equal propriety.

Borrowing and lending were so freely practiced it would have been difficult for a new arrival to determine to whom personal property belonged. Horses were no excep-

tion to this rule, and these equine operators usually were kept busy on the up and down equestrian trail to Des Moines.

Horseback Visiting.

The number of horses increased, so both men and women made visiting trips on horseback; and not infrequently one poor beast carried the man, wife and baby. Over-Sunday visitors at our house, the mention of which always caused much merriment, were the five members of a family. On the horse were Mr. Foster and his wife and a baby in her arms; a small child rode in front of the father and another behind his mother. The patient old animal was followed by a six-weeks' old foal, a yearling colt and two greyhounds. It was not unusual for visitors to remain a week or more.

The way to number the horses in a neighborhood was to attend a Sunday service; if the owner of a horse was not there the beast was in evidence, borrowed and ridden by someone else. Stealing horses would have been unprofitable work during the early years of our residence, but as their numbers increased the community was harassed with horse-thieves.

Grist Carrying.

For a long time grists were carried to mill on horseback. The sacks loosely-filled were laid across the animal's back. If the grist was large, the attendant walked. I do not think our settlement was responsible for the man who, when unable to balance the grist across his horse's back, shook the grain to one end of the sack and put stones in the other end. Horses or oxen were pretty sure to be mired if wagon milling-trips were made during the spring or fall rains. At such times the grist—a sack at a time—was packed out of the slough on the man's shoulder.

Our townsman, Jacob Bossert, admits that he started from Hook's Point with an ox-team and twenty bushels of

corn, and that the oxen frequently stuck in the mud. He was compelled to carry the corn to solid ground so many times that, for fifty years, it has been the standing joke among his friends that "Jake carried twenty bushels of corn fifteen miles on his back."

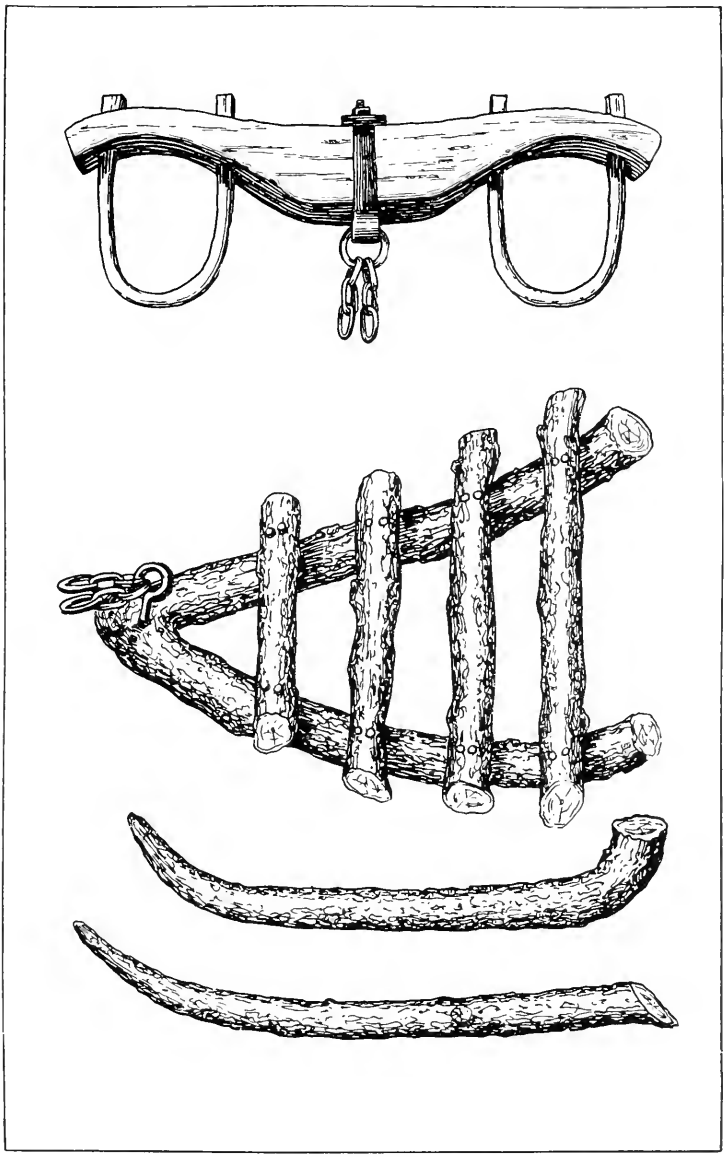
First Peddler; Saddlebags.

In the summer of 1852 the first peddler arrived. Jedediah Marks' pack was piled high on the back of his horse and the saddle-bags were bulging with the small and more valuable articles of his stock. He carried everything from jews-harps to andirons. Marks stayed at our house three or four days. When ready to depart he offered my mother a pair of stockings as payment for his board and lodging but they were refused. This peddler made periodical trips during the summer months. A few years later Cy. Smith came to us with the more pretentious peddler's-wagon. He was so well pleased with the country and the town's prospects that he decided to remain. As the town grew and business expanded "Cy" became one of our prosperous merchant-bankers.

The saddle-bags of sixty years ago were leathern side-pocket receptacles with a flap protection over the openings. A smaller pocket inside the larger one furnished a convenient place for money and small valuables. These bags either were fastened directly to the saddle or hung from the ends of a strap across the saddle's center.

Sledding.

The use of a "lizard" was an early method of transportation if snow was thin or sufficiently packed to prevent its pushing ahead of the contrivance. The lizard was made from the part of a tree where the branching of two boughs formed an acute angle resembling the letter "V." The prongs were about five feet long. The junction-end was dressed to an upward point and finished with a bolt and



OX-YOKE.
LIZARD.
NATURAL SLED BENTS.

chain for hitching the oxen. Slabs were fastened across the body on which the load was placed.

This primitive contraption behaved very well as long as the snow surface was smooth and oxen furnished motive power; but to stay aboard a lizard when roads were rough or haste was required would have taxed the agility of the western bronco-buster. Like a living thing it would, without warning, rear its head into the air and the next moment plunge its nose into the snow in a seemingly studied attempt to turn a somersault; or, with untiring energy, it would slew sidewise and unexpectedly and completely discharge its load of live or dead freight.

The persistent effort of the lizard to travel on both sides of the road instead of in the middle was modified somewhat by arranging at the V-point a cross-slab from which the chain traces were attached in two places instead of one.

I often have heard my mother laughingly relate that one Christmas day, illness in the Lion household necessitated her presence to assist them. Uncle Peter came for her on his lizard. Anxiety for the sick family caused him to forget his usual caution in driving, and mother was dumped into the snow half a dozen times during the up-and-down-hill trip to the Lion home; but, being of the roly-poly build, she was not injured.

Land-Lookers.

More or less money was carried by the land-lookers for the purpose of making payments on land or for buying out a homesteader or squatter. At one time a prospector named Anderson stopped with us. He was on horseback and carried a carpet-satchel full of money.

While going about with my father to locate land this valise was left at our house and we women-folk were at home alone. Jackson, Williams and the Funk brothers also left money in our keeping but the charge did not cause us any fear. The carpet-bag was kicked under the bed and

forgotten. Only for the changed present condition it would be superfluous to relate the circumstance.

Jake and Ben Funk came to us while the river was at its high mark. They had crossed the country afoot carrying their money for land purchase in a hand-satchel. Our Boone river boatmen ferried the boys across after Jake carefully had chained the satchel to the boat-stays for security.

The clothes of the Funk brothers needed immediate attention on account of the long journey through gumbo and sloughs, so they borrowed breeches from our boys and coats were worn in lieu of shirts while I expended my energy in the field of free mending and laundering.

Boat trips were not frequent. Traveling by water was a precarious method and, in addition, usually meant some distance afoot to reach the destination. Sledding on the ice, however, was practiced extensively for long distances.

Teamsters from Iowa City, Dubuque and Des Moines often brought from one to three travelers. This arrangement was made more for their company than convenience of transportation for all bad portions of the routes were gone over afoot both by passengers and drivers.

Paymaster Without Guard.

Supplies were sent over four hundred and fifty miles to Fort Clark—named in honor of General Clark—from St. Louis by water to Keokuk, Ia., thence to their destination by wagons, as long as the fort was maintained—until 1853.

The army paymaster traveled from Jefferson Barracks, Mo., headquarters, to the various frontier forts with the money for soldiers. There were less than one hundred members of the garrison at Fort Dodge and the infantry received but seven dollars per month; so, the amount of cash carried was not large—when viewed in the light of money standards today—especially when the trips were

made according to the army regulation of payment, every two months.

It was not always practicable, however, to observe the two months' rule even though it applied to military matters. The condition of weather and roads occasionally made it impossible to reach the forts except after some months delay. The army paymaster enroute to Fort Dodge stopped over night at our cabin. He made the trip without guard and did not seem in the least afraid. When he arrived, the saddle-bags with their burden of gold were removed from the horse's back and thrown on the floor as if they contained nothing more valuable than chips. Much more attention was shown to the horse than was bestowed on the money.

The paymaster resumed his journey the following day, seemingly unconscious of the fact that within a few decades civilization would be developed to the point that would make impossible such a trip without large numbers of armed guards, studied secrecy, the wakefulness of impending peril and the terror of being attacked. No man in our vicinity—to my knowledge—who carried money, ever was molested during the early days.

CHAPTER XI.

Home and Field Occupations.

One may, in detailing the events of history, cut from the record with the stroke of a pen a few years of colorless existence but pioneers were not so fortunate in disposing of time. The days were twenty-four hours long and no member of our household ever was idle for an extended time, except when asleep or sick.

It may be supposed, and with reason, that the continual sameness and primitive methods of labor would occasionally grow monotonous—not to say tiresome—but I do not remember ever to have heard a word of complaint or censure for our condition or surroundings.

The periodical house-cleaning seasons which have been the despair of the twentieth century benedict caused us little concern. The loom and beds were knocked down and with spinning-wheels, bedding, barrels, benches, etc., were carried into the yard. The puncheon floor was flushed and scrubbed; bedsteads and cordage scalded, bedding washed, ticks refilled with hay; everything replaced the same day —and presto! the trick was turned. The present-day delay of waiting for plumbers, painters or decorators we escaped. Owning little of the world's goods frequently may have its compensations.

There were, along with our necessary duties, many recreations to balance the account. At all seasons there were gatherings galore for the purpose of improvement and such working-bees invariably ended with an evening dancing party or taffy-pull.

There were many fall and spring enterprises in which the whole family were interested and in which many of them participated. Bee-tree hunting sometimes was haz-

ardous but yielded a bountiful supply of wild-honey. The picking of wild berries, plums and crab-apples was a pleasing pastime and added to the winter's store of food. The gathering of quantities of the various kinds of edible nuts furnished the motive for many Indian summer outings. The early spring work in our sugar-bush was anticipated with pleasure by old and young, and the grinding of cane for sorghum was classed as play instead of work.

Children on mischief bent often armed themselves with squirt-guns made from pithless elder or sumac and finished with a perforated plug and a plunger. When filled with water and discharged unexpectedly into the face of a passing victim the occasion was furnished for a scrimmage or a sprinting match. Such diversion, however, was not practiced with the expectation of escaping the work in hand; it was an expression of exuberant spirits and overflowing energy.

The Indian boys had nothing on our youngsters in the work of gorgeous personal decoration. Berry and nutting expeditions were favorable for experimentation in color schemes. The red and purple berries, the brown and black nut-hull stains were lavishly applied to the face, arms and legs in most grotesque designs. Walnut-hulling season was not entirely welcomed by the young men and young women, for handling the great juicy globes and stamping the pulpy hulls from the nuts rendered the bare hands and bare heels of the workers the shaded yellow, brown or black color which remained on the skin for weeks and indicated the extent of work done by the huller.

Pounding off the hulls did not always exempt one from the coloring process for the spurting juice spattered the face and arms and gave the appearance of large, round or irregular freckles. We did not think of protecting the hands with mittens; anyway, hand-covering would have lessened efficient, rapid work. Nor could we wait for hulls to dry before removing them. The shake roof sagged with its weight of drying nuts, but as those on the roof represented but a small proportion of the full supply it was

necessary to reduce the bulk as much as possible; this often was done before leaving the nut-patch.

The walnut, butternut, hickory-nut and hazelnut were much larger than they are today. They were not gathered until ripe and the stock did not become stale and dry. Every one was consumed during the winter.

Nature's Text-Book.

The natural danger from animals, insects and reptiles which might be threatened in all field and forest trips developed an acuteness of vision and hearing which rarely is acquired except through contact with the actual need for vigilance. Our text-book on nature was: The great out of doors, and the lessons were profitable and not at all unpleasant.

Youngsters were warned to scrutinize with care the wood-pile, brush-heaps and grass tufts as well as the sunny knolls and marshy places; this we did before venturing on or among them. We were instructed to be alert, vigilant, active; to listen and look for the bee, birds or other field-game; to note the peculiar call or cry and observe the habits of small forest-varmints, as well as to heed the movements and warning hiss of the many kinds of snakes.

Observation soon taught us to know from the location, material and construction of a nest, to what kind of wild fowl or ground-nesting bird it belonged. The tree-nesters' homes also were familiar to us. John Thomas could imitate almost any bird-call and was so in love with the friendly flyers he declared he saw and heard them in his sleep.

We knew the sections which yielded the best strawberries, blackberries and gooseberries, and where hazelnuts grew in greatest profusion. We knew the trees from seedling to sapling and to the forest giant, and climbed the grapevine which decorated the branches. We gathered sumac-berries for coloring and brought home elderberries and spiles. We tramped through underbrush, and across

clearings, and walked or hitched along on rail fences for long distances to avoid too close association with snakes.

Prudent but Fearless.

We were obediently cautious but absolutely unafraid. We imagined that human judgment and skill were superior to animal sagacity. Perhaps the old apothegm: "Those who know nothing, fear nothing," might apply here, for the cry of the catamount or the night howl of the wolf bothered us not at all. An evening pastime for the children was to count the fiery eyes of these creatures as they gleamed upon us from the brush-thickets adjacent to the cabin.

The fact that young stock frequently was destroyed by wolves did not—to my knowledge—raise the question of a child's danger from the same source. We had received instructions and the warning admonition from our parents and were expected to circumvent the creatures or avoid the danger.

One thing, however, was in our favor. Wild animals or snakes are not aggressive unless disturbed, or attacked, or except when fear is shown or effort made to escape. If a forest varmint was sighted while the children were at play they did not scamper home screaming. On the contrary, the playing was continued and a close watch kept on the intruder. When the fastest runner could slip away unnoticed he took to his heels and reported the circumstances to the hunters who usually succeeded in killing the creature.

Pets.

Seeking for nests of wild-fowl was an every day spring pastime. It was a great source of pleasure for pioneer children to be permitted to make pets of the fowl nestlings, cubs or fawns that were taken by the hunters and brought home captive. Goslings and ducklings were my especial favorites.

Many early settlers had pet sand-hill cranes and some

of these were none too agreeable with strangers. A child who showed fear of the long-legged, long-billed bird promptly was attacked or chased about the premises.

Wild turkeys, prairie-chicks, quails and pheasants were the most beautiful and cunning little folk of field and forest that one can imagine, but they were not susceptible to the blandishments of boys and girls. The eggs often were hatched at home and the baby chicks carefully handled but within a few weeks they invariably returned to their wild, free life.

We captured several swans the second season after our arrival but they did not thrive in captivity or increase in numbers.

Eagles were quite numerous during the early years but we did not seek their extermination. The boys, however, took a few shots at the embodiment of the national emblem, wholly from curiosity as a nature study. A half-grown bald eagle with a broken wing was brought home one day and given to me. "Baldy" was morose and not a tractable pet. He grew to an unusual size and his plumage of natural colors was most beautifully marked. He was quarrelsome with domestic fowls and finally was killed in a fight with a turkey buzzard which one day invaded the premises.

When our hunters or trappers killed a mother wolf they often brought home the coyote cubs. The pretty little wolflings usually were kept as pets until they yielded to the call of the wild and escaped, or until they were put to death for some depredation.

Coons were so numerous and so easily domesticated that little effort was necessary to tame them. They were playful, cunning and very mischievous. While young they performed the most amusing tricks but as they grew older —although well fed—a periodical raid upon the pet-fowls' roosting-place was made in spite of all precautions.

We did not attempt to tame beaver, otter or other water-animals.

Very young deer-fawns or elk-calves are, perhaps, as beautiful and docile pets as can be found among wild crea-

tures, but they frequently become offensively familiar and rough when older.

We tamed and raised many fawns. For several years after game became scarce we kept a male and female deer. They were allowed to browse and pasture with the cattle but the stag horned the critters, and threw down the rail-fences with his antlers. Their presence seemed to stimulate the breachy proclivities of the cattle; so, a paling inclosure of shakes about eight feet high was built for the deer. The creatures, however, were so restless that they finally were allowed to run at large.

The periods for shedding antlers were times of seclusion. The stag did not return after one such vacation. The doe was more restless than ever. She wandered about and continuously called for her mate. One morning at daybreak Uncle Peter Lyon discovered "Polly" in his stable-yard. Mistaking her for a wild animal, he shot her. When it was found that she bore our brand we were notified, and Uncle Peter expressed great regret for the killing.

Wild Fowl.

There was such an abundance of wild fowl—geese, ducks, partridges and prairie chickens that in dressing them we saved only the breasts. Quail we did not kill; and if caught in the traps or deadfalls prepared for other game they were released. We did not consider rabbit, squirrel or opossum worth the expenditure of ammunition. The pelts were valueless and there was a perennial supply of bigger and better game.

Barnyard poultry, during the early years, was a disappearing quantity with us. If an old Dominick biddy succeeded in bring off her brood the hawks, buzzards, weasles, minks, skunks and various other varmints made life uncomfortable for them as well as for their caretakers.

Poultry production cost us absolutely nothing. The fowls roosted in the stable or trees; they wandered, and scratched, and foraged far and near; they hid their nests

and brooded unattended and undisturbed by us. Domestic fowls that came to our yard to roost were claimed by us; any number that sought our neighbors' barnyards belonged to them. Eggs and poultry were unsalable, and therefore, claims of ownership were not considered or contested.

The early part of the season our hunters supplied us with eggs for the table from the nests of wild turkeys and geese. After a fowl hunt father regaled himself with fried eggs cooked over the coals on the bright, steel fire shovel. Brooding water-fowl frequently were brought home to us where they hatched their young. Wings were clipped to discourage flight but in the autumn the natural desire to migrate possessed them, and unless killed for food or confined for the purpose of replenishing feather beds, they made their way southward despite the defective aerial appendages.

Flowers.

It was unnecessary for us to cultivate a flower garden in the early '50's. The prairies were flecked with wild bright colored blossoms and the woods were redolent with perfume from budding-time until the frosts of fall. There were the crowfoot anemone, bloodroot, fly-flowers, pitcher plant, marsh marigold, bluebells, sweet Williams, woodbine honeysuckle, columbines, flags, pond-lilies, spatterdock, Indian turnip and ferns in luxuriant and varied profusion; and the May flower, wild rose, grapevine, plum, cherry, crabapple, elderberry, thornapple and basswood trees in their season made the air heavy with fragrance and furnished a rich supply of nectar for the bees.

Cattle not only grazed upon the succulent grasses but almost half the cured hay supply was composed of the white and purple-pink sweet Williams, while buttercups, sorrels, mints, lilies, bull or button-weed and daisies in many varieties helped to stock the manger. The prairie gum-weed or rosin plant furnished the family with chewing gum and the "cud" was passed promiscuously among the children.

When home flower gardens were cultivated the hollyhock, marigold, saffron, "pretty-by-night"—four o'clock; and touch-me-not—so called because the ripe seed-pods burst open at the touch—were the general standbys.

The buttonhole bouquet was not in vogue during the early years but many men, both young and old, wore flowers on their hats and the girls relieved the plainness of hair dressing with a seasonable blossom.

It was said of the brake—a species of fern—that:

"If you break the first brake, and kill the first snake,
You'll do everything that you undertake."

I suppose as long as flowers fleck the fields and daisies deck the dooryards young people will seek to know the personal preferences of their associates. The flowers will be named for one of the opposite sex, and the leaves, one by one, loosened with the monotoned chant—"He loves me, he loves me not." Young women seemed to accept the dictum of petal pulling as absolute, but the appearance of the young man in question with the assurance that the daisy had falsified the record of his heart, changed the outlook then, undoubtedly, as it does today.

The same method was followed in the naming of seeded vegetables or fruit, and the following list was gone through: "One I love; two I love; three I love, they say; four I love with all my heart; five I cast away; six she loves; seven he loves; eight they both love; nine he comes; ten he tarries; eleven he courts; twelve he marries." When it was decided that one was to marry, it was natural to wish to know if the man were to be a "richman, poorman, beggarman, thief, doctor, lawyer, merchant or chief," and this was decided by listing the buttons on one's dress. Finally, the choice of a color for the bride's wedding dress was important, and was chosen from this list: "Married in white, you'll quarrel and fight; married in black, you'll wish yourself back; married in red, you'll wish yourself dead; married in green, you'll live like a queen; married in brown, you'll live in a town; married in blue, you'll always be true; married in grey, you never will stay; married in

pink, you'll live with a slink." As ill luck seemed to follow the larger list of colors I exercised my personal preference and was married in white.

Honey.

I do not think through all the early years we ever were without wild-honey. The method of locating a bee-tree was to smear the smooth surface of a stump with honey and start a bee-bread smudge. The bees attracted by the odor would come to feast on the sweetness. Laden with honey they would circle upward above the trees and take a bee-line to their storehouse. The hunters followed the course of the burdened insects until the honeyed habitation was located.

The bees were smoked from their shelter with sulphur, the tree chopped down and the honey brought home. We considered a few bee-stings of little more consequence than mosquito bites. Bee-trees often were located and marked in summer. Later, when the swarm was dormant, the trees were cut and carted away. The industrious insects then could work for us at the home apiary.

Sections of hollow logs were provided for their storehouse and we allowed the bees to design their own interior decoration. "Survival of the fittest" was our bee manual, and if a swarm died we procured another from the woods.

Talman Wiltsey was the pioneer breeder of bees. He supplied honey to the settlers and swarms to anyone who wished to invest in bee-stock. He did not isolate his bees, and unfortunately, lost a horse as a result of bee-stings.

The animal had strayed into the bee-yard to graze, and upset a bee-hive. The irate swarm attacked the horse. Seeking to escape, another hive was overturned. The frantic beast plunged, kicked, rolled and finally ran groaning to the stable. A quilt was thrown over him and the bees crushed and scraped off. The whisky antidote immediately was administered but the colt's eyes and nostrils soon were closed with the swelling. The tender, thinly haired parts

of the body were covered with knots of formic poisoning. The animal suffered several hours before death relieved him.

Mr. Wiltsey remained in the work of bee-culture until his death.

Jerking Venison.

Our method of jerking venison was a strictly up-to-date one. An excavation about six feet square and eighteen inches deep was prepared. Fagots were piled into the hole and fired. The wood was replenished as it burned down, and when the pit was nearly full of live coals a criss-cross rack of saplings was placed above the hot bed. The ends of the frame rested on solid ground and the lattice-work was covered with raw deer meat.

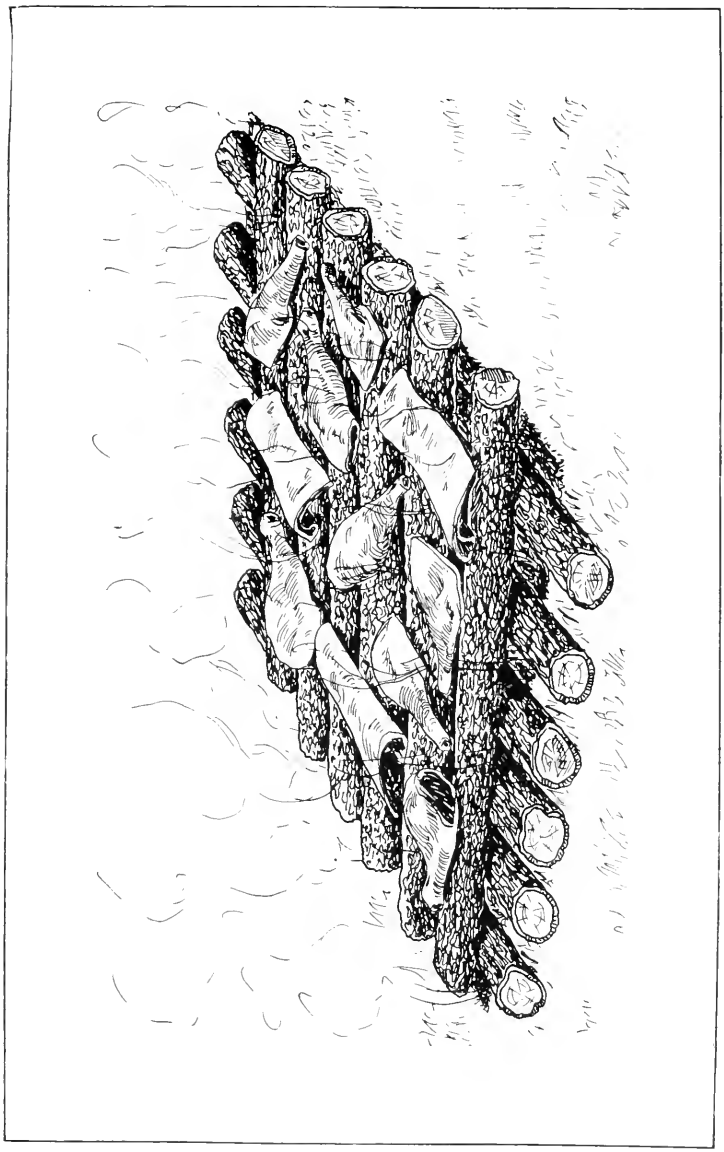
The intense heat seared and partly cooked the venison, which preserved it during the summer season. Hunks of ham sometimes fell through the frame-openings and were consumed. Occasionally the poles became ignited and unless the fire were discovered immediately the whole consignment was dropped upon the coals. A few pieces of the meat, perhaps, could be raked out before it was scorched seriously but it was very easy to loose all of it.

The smell of curing flesh always attracted the wolves, but while the fire was brilliant they did not attempt to appropriate the meat supply. They were, however, at such times more venturesome in prowling about, and the season for jerking venison was a most auspicious one for taking wolfskins.

A part of the summer's supply of meat was subjected to the slower process of smoking and a portion to the still slower process of drying.

Pigs.

A pair of small pigs was purchased as we passed through Des Moines. They became great pets before we reached our destination for they constantly were carried in the arms of some of the children during the remainder



METHOD OF JERKING VENISON.

of the journey. A pole pen, lean-to fashion, was arranged beside the cabin door, for pig comfort, but often throughout the winter the pigs were allowed to sleep inside the house.

The following spring we purchased an old sow. She possessed a frame that easily could have carried six hundred pounds of flesh although perhaps two hundred and fifty pounds was her actual weight. A strong rail pen was built for her use until she became wonted to the place. The bodily activity and lusty lung exercise of Mrs. Porker were worthy a study in wild life. She had been removed from her porcine associates and deprived of her liberty; so, naturally, was lonesome and resentful. The enclosure was surrounded by youthful admirers and sympathizers but that did not in the least mollify her. She would charge around the pen with a Woof! Woof! Woof! which would send us scurrying away from the immediate vicinity. She then would rear on her hind legs, place her fore feet on the top rail of the pen and let out a squeal that was a fair and full substitute for the steam-whistle of today; however, as the nerves of pioneers were not frayed at both edges we did not mind the noisy disturbance.

Several extra tiers of rails were placed upon the pig-pen as security against escape, but the second morning after her arrival the enclosure was empty. With dogs and guns the men folk started in pursuit of the runaway. Mrs. Hog was overhauled two or three miles from home making good time on the return trip to Des Moines; but her journey had not been without peril. She had been attacked by a she-wolf and three half-grown cubs, the dead bodies of which were discovered along the trail she had taken.

We called this hog the rail-scaler. She literally would walk up the side of a ten rail pen and go over the top without misplacing a single tier; but we outgeneraled her by drawing the rails to a cone-shape and leaving but a small opening at the apex. The children climbed the pen corners as they did the cabin corners; and we fed the hog from the top or poked feed through the cracks between rails.

The old sow finally grew accustomed to our ministrations and became tractable if not friendly. One morning she presented us with fourteen fine, healthy pigs whereupon she was released from captivity. She raised every one of the pigs and they succeeded in raising everything which came in contact with their long and industrious noses.

Deer meat and wild-fowl flesh was plentiful but it was necessary for us to raise hogs to supply shortening and the grease-gravy so essential in dressing corn dodger. Woods-pastured hog-flesh was not so firm and white as the corn fed product and the lard would liquify with the application of very little heat. We did not kill one pig at a time and thus secure fresh meat at all seasons. Instead we made a regular killing and butchered the year's supply at one time—unless we miscalculated our needs. Butchering-bees were as popular in pioneer times as log-rollin's or cabin-raisin's.

My recollection of our domestic critters during the early years is: they either were bawlers, blatters or squealers. If we, however, considered the vociferous agitation at all, we thought it a chronic state of contrariness and were not aware that company, or food of the proper kind or quantity, would have satisfied them and quieted their cries.

For several years after our arrival pork, as a commercial product, was valueless; any surplus supply was distributed among the neighbors. For many years hog meat brought no more than $2.50 per hundred after being hauled to Iowa City, Dubuque or Des Moines.

Prairie Fires.

We were not afraid of Indians or wild beasts. High water and bad weather were natural difficulties to be worked through with patience and caution. A part of the season, however, we were greatly alarmed by the fire menace. The prairie grass grew so luxuriantly and the thickets of underbrush were so dense that during the fall, the possibility of prairie-fires gave us constant concern. We did not neglect the precaution of plowing and back-firing about the premises no matter what else may have been neglected.

Prairie-fires were magnificent sights. At times they traveled far faster than a horse; and often spelled destruction to property and death to unfortunate settlers. Sweeping with the wind, great tufts of burning grass were hurled rods ahead of the moving body of the fire. Roads did not retard, and creeks did not prevent a fire's progress in dry weather. The red reflection on the sky together with a high wind were signals for neighbors to hasten to the assistance of settlers in the danger zone.

Many times fire-fighters returned from the work with faces and hands blistered. Father's face once was so inflamed from fire rescure work that for days we feared he would lose his sight. The hair of Uncle Peter Lyon was closely singed in a fire fight east of town. His clothing became ignited and but for the assistance from other workers he doubtless would have been burned to death.

A man named Mills and his little son perished in a prairie fire north of Homer, in 1851; the horse being unable to carry them to safety. The following season Lew Wellington and family while on the way to our settlement were burned to death on the prairie in the southeast part of the county. The charred remains of wagon, oxen and a family of six persons were found when search was made; and but for the fact that we were expecting their arrival, their identity could not have been established. Later in the fall of 1852, two hunters, Jim Phipps and Sam Judy, were burned to death on the prairie west of Mud lake.

Fire dangers were not greatly lessened for a long time; as late as 1860 a man named Swearingen with his family of five who were emigrating from the East in a covered wagon, were overtaken by a prairie-fire south of Hamilton county and all perished in the flames.

Snakes.

All pioneers had the usual disquieting experiences with snakes. There were snake sections infested with rattlers, blue racers, bull and blacksnakes and large numbers of the

smaller garden varieties; but the venom of none of them except the rattlesnake was considered to be dangerous.

The members of our family who were habitual hunters had the periodical spring encounter with schools of snakes. The infested districts were made the objective point for snake hunts, and literally speaking, thousands of them were killed by our men-folk during the early years.

The unusually prolific snake grounds hereabout were located on the flat and south exposure of the hill opposite the mill site and a few miles north of town at a sandy, open space on the bank of the White-Fox creek. Rock crevices were natural hiding places; the Briggs' river bank furnished many sunny ledges for their spring recreation; likewise, furrows that had been plowed for trails or paths to the neighbors' cabins and the late fall plowing which had been done for fire protection—these were sunning places and were the scenes of many successful snake hunts. During the early part of May, on warm, sunny days, snakes by the hundreds could be found warming up from the winter's rest.

The most auspicious period for snake killing was when they were emerging from winter quarters. This time also was attended with less danger to the hunter as the reptiles were too stiff to strike or to escape. Almost as effective and a less dangerous method was to locate the nests and destroy the eggs.

The best weapon with which to attack a snake was a light, tough but not too stiff stick. One well aimed blow was quite sufficient. The same skill, however, in delivering a fatal blow to a snake was as necessary as good marksmanship in hunting. The household snake implement was a hoe with a flatly turned eye, which brought the blade on a straight line with the handle. The strike was made as with a spear and Mr. Snake usually was cut in two. When a snake was finished his tail did not live until sundown as was popularly believed.

Surrounded by Rattlesnakes.

Roll reported that on the White-Fox snake grounds he had stood at a given point and counted twenty-five rattlesnakes in a semi-dormant state within a three rod radius. He never was snake-bitten but has been made stomach-sick from the nauseating odor which is given off from such schools of reptiles.

Two young brothers frequently were bitten by snakes while grubbing and clearing. At such times the wound was sucked to extract the poison, and as an added measure of precaution, a slippery-elm or rattlesnake-plantain poultice immediately was applied. A "horn" of spirits, an ash-bark brew or a few drops of hartshorn were administered if the patient's condition seemed to require it.

Soon after his arrival one of Joe Peabody's sons, while grubbing, was bitten by a rattler. The young man was clearing the refuse from the root of a stump to facilitate his work. Simultaneously with the warning rattle the youth was struck on the back of the hand. The household remedies were applied but they were unavailing. His arm swelled to a great size and turned purple to the shoulder. This acute condition subsided and recurred periodically and the patient was taken to Des Moines for medical treatment. Joe Jr. recovered but his right arm was partially paralyzed.

Jotham Lyon, also, was dangerously ill from the effect of a rattlesnake bite. He suffered and was unable to work for many weeks. The whisky antidote was resorted to in his case, possibly with the idea that: "if a little is good, a good deal is better." Rye and bourbon were administered early and often to the half-unconscious patient. His condition did not immediately improve so the interval between doses was shortened and the quantity of liquor increased. Joth did not die from the snake-bite or the remedy, but he was incapacitated for the summer's work.

Size of Snakes.

Innumerable snakes killed by our men-folk were six and eight feet in length. Frequently a big bullsnake would seek to make the acquaintance of the family by crawling into the cabin; but the curiosity seekers always became victims of the well aimed blows of mother or the children armed with the hoe or broomstick. Two of our dogs were experts as snake catchers and would locate an ophidian wherever he might be concealed about the premises. The dogs were permitted the freedom of the cabin before bedtime, during the snake running season, so they might nose out a serpent and make it safe for the family to sleep.

Dogs and cattle often were bitten by snakes but we lost no critters from that cause. The rattles from the tails of dead snakes were strung on cords as playthings for the younger children. They were, likewise, worn as pendant decorations on leathern belts and collars of the youthful nimrods who had taken them.

Mike McGonigal, one of our bachelor helpers, was desperately afraid of snakes. The proximity of reptiles made him almost as hysterically helpless as a woman. This predisposition induced his fellow-workers to perpetrate many a snaky joke on him. A large bullsnake was killed one day and placed across the narrow brush-lined pathway. All the boys were wise to the joke except Mac. They started for home single file—one of the boys ahead of the victim. When the place was reached the leader yelled: "SNAKES!" and leaped over the dead reptile. The boys in the rear also yelled. Mac screamed with fright and fell almost in a fit across the dead snake. The boys discontinued their jokes after this incident.

It often has been reported that pioneers ate snake meat either from curiosity or necessity. We, at least, were not so curious and I do not think our neighbors were. We did not eat eels, turtles, squirrel, rabbit, opossum or any of the trapped animals. Venison, wild-fowl and fish furnished our table. The scarcity of big game did not compel us to experiment with small fry.

Cow Herding and Hunting.

One of the daily, early spring tasks which devolved upon the children was the herding of milch-cows and nursing ewes away from the rampion and wild parsnip patches.

Ramps and parsnips made an earlier and ranker growth than the other pasturage. The former—with the onion flavor—rendered the milk supply unfit for use and the latter poisoned the critters, especially the sheep. Later in the season other vegetation was preferred by the herd, and the cows then were permitted to wander at will through the thickets and sloughs. We gained little, however, from the relief of herding. Nearly every night one or two of the cattle did not come home and the "C'm boss, c'm boss," often brought no response.

Someone, perhaps two or three children then were delegated to hunt the delinquents. When they were not far away the bell or "ball" of the cow served to guide us. The lost ones frequently were found stuck in the mud somewhere on the town site. Especially was this true after the frost had gone out or flood-waters receded. The flat east of Superior street and south from Division to Ohio streets was a splendid miring-place. This location was covered with water during the season's freshets until the Chicago and Northwestern railway company constructed the track-grade along the river.

Old settlers seem to think that more water was discharged during the early floods than at the present time. Dredging, draining and building obstructions along the river's banks changes the aspect rather than the reality. Then, we saw the waters spread out and pour over the surfaces without hindrance. We viewed a sea on all sides and imagined each recurring flood unparalleled. It has been reported that a boat was used to land at the Webster City House, at Bank and Seneca streets, the wet season of 1858, but I do not remember that condition or incident.

All summer's heat did not dry out these submerged lowlands and we knew about where we would find "stuck"

cows. When a mired victim was located we blew three blasts on our best shrill-voiced willow-wood whistle. When an answer was received from home we awaited the arrival of help. If we received no answer a trip home was necessary to procure assistance.

Pulling Cows From Mud.

When all was in readiness a man waded in and attached a rope or log-chain about the critter's horns—an effective hitching-place for the rescue line. A mooley cow was a liability in a slough-hole but she was an asset in her inability to horn down rail fences.

The heads of flocks and herds were not closely confined for a long time. A bull, a boar or a ram might be encountered at almost any time or place. Free exercise reduced their pugnacious proclivities somewhat, but their company was not courted by unprotected women or children. We were discreetly shy of their presence except when close to sheds, fences or trees. One of our bulls was shot after he several times had chased and treed the boys. No one thought of dehorning a critter at that time although horns often were broken or crumpled by fighting or by tossing fences.

CHAPTER XII.

Accidents, Births, Weddings, Deaths.

A strange fatality seemed to pursue our young neighbor Phil Jenkins. His presence invariably precipitated an episode either of an amusing or serious nature. The two years of his life with us was a continuous round of incidents and accidents. If an adventure were related, this was the first question: "Was Phil there?"

The young man was courageous and venturesome to foolhardiness; but he was the life of a crowd and his splendid spirit of helpfulness made his presence welcome and desirable, although a company breathed easier as evening drew near if nothing of unusual import had happened to Phil.

The young man was present at one of the early logging-bees, and the oxen were a bit perverse in their usual work of even-pulling. Phil, in the attempt to quiet and guide them sprang upon the back of one of the animals. The beast was unaccustomed to a mount and was "skeered," which was an occasion for unusual operations.

The oxen were off, in a flash, for a wild run through the thicket. Fearing the youth might be dashed against a tree and killed the other workers followed the fleeing cattle. Over the ridge, down the hillside, across the clearing below the mill site plunged the critters. The pursuers noted that Phil was retaining his place on the back of the beast, but the Iowa Tam-O-Shanter's senses whirled as he realized they were nearing the river which was swollen by the autumn rains. He feared to let go; so, he frantically hung on. A moment of darkness. The oxen made a flying leap into the water and, for a moment, were entirely submerged. Phil loosened his hold, rose to the surface and swam to the bank where he soon was located by his fellow-workers.

The frightened ox, when the cause of the excitement was removed, became as tractable as ever and with his yokefellow began browsing on the opposite side of the stream. The wet and shivering young man, undaunted by his experience, swam across the river and headed the animals toward home but he did not attempt to ride. He was badly bunged-up but not seriously injured.

The winter following this episode Phil was engaged in snaking home a supply of wood from the logging-camp. On a downward slide the chain slipped and in rearranging the snub the slack in the log chain looped itself about his foot. Before the oxen could be stopped the victim had been dragged some distance.

Phil's cries of distress soon brought assistance and he at once was taken home. It was found, when the cowhide boot was cut away, that the bones of the foot were crushed badly, the flesh mangled and the member bleeding profusely.

A consultation was held. His parents decided that it would be necessary to sacrifice the front part of the foot. A strong band was tied in front of the heel and across the instep marking the line for amputation, and a stick was twisted and knotted in the band to arrest the flow of blood.

Surgical Operation.

A wood-chopper was chosen for the work who was known to be so accurate with an ax that a clean stroke at exactly the line indicated would result. My brother, Jack Brewer, was chosen for the work. It was a terrible ordeal for both surgeon and patient. It was, however, the best means at hand, and a real pioneer never was known to shirk a responsibility.

The stump of the foot immediately was thrust into a puffball—a fungus growth which was said to possess properties for coagulating and reducing the flow of blood. Granny Peabody acted as nurse for several days. The foot

healed nicely and no complications resulted from this first surgical operation in our community.

The foregoing are but two of the many mishaps that befell Phil Jenkins.

His fatal encounter with the community boar was sorely regretted but it was thought to be the inevitable outcome which might have been postponed but could not have been escaped.

Boar Fight.

In the fall of 1852 a number of boys and girls had planned an afternoon nutting expedition. We, accordingly, repaired to the hickory grove south of town on what now is Edgewood Farm. The boys climbed the trees and clubbed off the nuts. They then decided to skirmish through the adjoining thickets for game. The girls were to collect and hull the nuts during their absence. Phil Jenkins, whose crippled foot prevented his joining the chase, remained with us.

We were busily engaged in the work when the noisy approach of an animal through the bushes attracted our attention. Phil seized his rifle, anticipating the pleasure of bringing down a deer without pursuing him; but instead of a deer Slab-Sides the boar, having been disturbed by the hunters plunged through the bushes into the nut-grove clearing. The young man threw down his gun when the hog appeared and we girls shouted with laughter at his discomfiture.

He, however, must have understood porcine propensities better than did we, for, as the hog halted a moment at the clearing's edge Phil hurriedly said to us: "You girls take to the timber!" He snatched up his firearm, but with a rush, a snort, and a cracking of his tusks the boar was close upon him before he could prime and fire.

Phil sprang behind a tree, drew his bowie-knife and gave battle. It was dodge and thrust with a vengeance, and soon the blood was flowing freely from the hog's many

wounds. The tree furnished the man shelter from the murderous charges of the boar, and to the terrified onlookers it seemed the circling combatants must fall with fatigue.

Several of the girls ran into the wood screaming to attract the attention of the hunters. The others procured clubs and waited for whatever emergency might arise.

Phil stumbled and went to his knees but quickly recovered his equilibrium. At his misstep Liza Perkins and I ran forward thinking we might help to beat off the brute, but our protector's "Get out o' here!" was so authoritative we immediately retired.

The young man would have tired out the assailant had it not been for his crippled foot. He had succeeded in dodging the onslaughts and had inflicted wounds with his knife which reduced the strength of the maddened boar.

A signal shot from the woods indicated that the hunting party had heard the cries of the girls, but with the assurance that relief was near, disaster approached.

Phil made another misstep and was knocked to the ground. The beast's tusks tore through the flesh a dozen times before we could reach his side; but with a supreme effort Phil thrust his bowie-knife into the belly of the boar —ripped him open—and with an expiring breath the brute's entrails gushed over the prostrate form of our protector.

Phil's jugular vein had been pierced by the boar's tusks and he lived but a few moments. His life was nearly spent when the returning hunters arrived. His last words were: "Well, girls, I've had my last mix-up, but I wish it had been a wild animal instead of a common hog."

The body was carried to our home on a litter which the boys improvised by pinning their coats together with thorns and fastening them to hand-poles. The interment was made on the hill south of town.

Crushed by a Log; Near Drowning.

Luther Schultz was killed in the late fall work of log-rolling in 1850.

An immense walnut cut was being raised to the top of the pile. The handspike which the young man was manipulating slipped and the force of his body against the pole threw him forward. The log, loosened at his end, escaped the pinch of the other workmen. It crashed downward, caught the youth between the timbers and crushed his skull.

He was buried across the river northeast of the Chase mill site.

Luther Schultz had, during the summer season, saved his twelve year old sister Dorcas from death by drowning.

The Schultz family—six boys and five girls—were veritable human ducks. They had lived on the bank of the Wabash river in Indiana and from infancy waded, paddled and splashed daily. All the stunts of the swimmer were to them familiar. They seemed quite as much at home in high water as in low and preferred breasting a strong current instead of indolently stroking their way on a placid surface.

The young children of a family often accompanied the men-folk to their work in wood or field. A tree had been cut upon the river's bank. In order to save trimming and clearing it had been felled into the stream. The children raced to the spot. Such an opportunity was meant to be improved. They shinned forward upon the tree-trunk and sought convenient limbs for teetering above the water.

Dorcas, more venturesome than the others, doffed her outer garment and made her way out upon a slender branch to the last fork capable of bearing her weight. She stood erect, a foot on either bough, and to her father on shore shouted: "Look , Pap, watch me dive!"

The workers turned to see the daring miss put in motion the limb on which she stood. At the proper rebound her supple form shot through the air and plunged downward into the river.

The child, however, either had miscalculated the depth of water or the height of her springing start. Her head struck the bottom of the river and the impact partly stunned

her. She rose to the surface but could not call for help, and feebly motioned to the men on the bank.

Luther, fully dressed, plunged into the stream and headed for his drifting sister. She sank the second time when almost within the brother's grasp. Instantly he dove and swept his arms about the drowning girl. He swam to shallow water and carried her to safety.

She was brought to our house. The scalp-wound was stitched and bandaged by my mother, and within a few days Miss Dorcas was fully recovered. The nearly fatal experience did not lessen her love for the water. Before she was steady on her feet after the accident she was back in her aquatic element regardless of the admonitions of her more timid playmates.

River Work.

It is somewhat remarkable that no casualty befell our men-folk in their work on the river and in the seemingly bottomless sloughs which abounded in every direction. Our boys were not expert swimmers, but when immigration began in earnest two or more of them were continually busy in the work of water transportation, and during the spring freshets the work was extremely dangerous. Almost any time of day a loud "Ho-o-o-oh" might be heard, which was the signal for the ferryman.

The vehicle of transportation—a log canoe or raft, sometimes two canoes hitched together—was towed or poled up stream to a bend on the opposite side of the river from the waiting pilgrims. The current of the water was deflected by the jutting curve of the cape to a general cross-wise direction toward the hoped-for landing place.

The boatman took his position at the rude steering apparatus which poorly served to guide the craft and avoid being swung into the swift main channel of the river. If the operator miscalculated the distance, swiftness of current or possible undertow he missed his harbor and landed in a swamp or bayou perhaps a mile or more down stream,

in which case the craft was towed back to the starting place and relaunched.

When the goods or passengers were aboard, a similar method of manipulation brought them across—providing they were fortunate enough to escape being dumped into the river. The simpleton who rocks the boat is a development of our later days. A measure of skill was required to keep a canoe right side up, and not a false or foolish motion was permitted. Warning to that effect was given when any one embarked and full confidence was accorded the ferryman.

A present-day transportation company would require for station or harbor purposes two or three miles of the water-front if relatively as much land were used for loading and unloading goods as was utilized by the pioneers in river work.

Drowning.

Other families were less fortunate than ours on the waterways. I believe the earliest drowning was that of Fred Maine. He had cut a hole in the ice for the purpose of spearing fish for Christmas dinner, 1851. Leaving home in the forenoon he expected to return soon although the delay did not cause anxiety for several hours. Search was made and the spearing-hole located at about the Zublin ice-field north of town. The ice-pick and spear were lying beside the hole and the ax on the river's bottom. No trace of Fred could be found and his body was never recovered.

Another early drowning was that of John Garmoe. The unfortunate young man was a brother of Isaac Garmoe who later located in the western part of the county. All streams at that early time were normally bank full; but the casualty did not occur at flood-water season, and, therefore, seemed particularly deplorable. The young man had helped to tow and canoe the family belongings across Skunk creek when, without noticeable warning, on his return swimming trip he sank out of sight and did not rise to the surface.

Lost.

The summer after our arrival my mother sent me alone to Uncle Billy Stanley's, about three-quarters of a mile distant, to procure roasting ears for dinner. I was to cross the river, keep to the right a short distance, turn half again to the left guided by trees and stumps to my destination.

I proceeded to the river's bank where two logs had been felled—one on either side—the tops interlacing in midstream. The branches partly had been trimmed to permit easy passage over the foot-logs.

I crossed the river and observed the various directions of the trails of hunters and wood-choppers and the paths that led to the cabins of our neighbors. My mother, evidently having in mind but one path, had told me to turn to the right and after reaching a big stump to turn half way in another direction and follow the path past an immense maple tree.

I fared forth on a trail that led through a forest of sumac-bushes. I wish I could describe the luxuriant growth of these "shumakes." The stunted, dusty, bare-limbed specimens of today give no hint of their magnificence. The body-stalks were clean and bright and the eye could not penetrate the dense and perfect canopy of leaves. I emerged from this beautiful surrounding into a maze of many paths. The hazel-bushes had been trampled to make travel possible and literally, a bird could not fly through the underbrush and briar-thickets.

I trudged along some distance but did not locate the big stump marker. I removed my sunbonnet that I might better survey the surroundings. Was I lost? No, but Uncle Billy's cabin surely was.

I retraced my steps to the foot-logs. I carefully viewed the various paths and chose another which gave promise of being the right one.

I pursued the lonely way for a long time with no better results and once more I returned to the river's edge and made a fresh start. This time I struck the wood-choppers'

trail and there were many stumps and many maples and I knew that I had again gone wrong.

I slowly returned riverward; and the tales of lost hunters were revolved in my mind. I was not frightened, however, and had no intention of abandoning the trip, for I knew that a day long enough and leg-muscles strong enough finally would bring me to my destination. When I reached the river's brink for the third start, I faced about, chose another path, and this time having guessed right I reached Uncle Billy's in safety.

The midday menu was minus the roasting-ears but they were relished quite as well for supper. I do not recall that I was questioned about the delay, or that anxiety was expressed at my unusually long absence. I had accomplished the mission. To be able to "make a shift" for any contingency was expected of both young and old.

The Way to Homer.

Soon after we permanently were located at Newcastle, Roll was instructed to go to the supply-station at Homer to procure coffee and ammunition. He was familiar only with the point of timber at the Johnny Frank place near home.

He was told to travel westward to a raise of land, south to a point of timber, west through a big slough, south and west and south again until the youth was excusable if he lost his bearings. He, however, afoot and alone, obediently started through the tall timber with the spirit of the adventurer to try anything once.

He proceeded to the third lap of the pedestrian performance when, during his progress through the big slough he became hopelessly confused in direction. He thought of all the things he had heard for marking the directions of the compass and for locating one's self when lost; for instance, the field flowers turning their faces toward the sun, the rosin-weed leaves pointing their edges north and south and the parallel seams in boulders lining in the same

direction. He found upon examination that the nodding, golden heads of the field-daisies were turned in various directions; the nigger-heads — few in number — were seamed in opposite directions; the compass-plant also failed him; and the axils of artichoke-stalks opened possibilities for still greater confusion. He, therefore, made his way through the slough to the nearest fringe of timber and climbed the tallest tree to take observation.

He scanned the horizon from his leafy perch until he located in the distance the familiar wood near his home. This definite knowledge relieved his agitation. He remained in the observatory for some time studying the topography of the outlying districts.

He finally shinned down the tree-trunk and made a bee-line for home instead of Homer. Having spent so much time in locating landmarks he decided to make a fresh start with the morrow's sunrise. This he did with no additional instruction and the trip was made without delay or incident.

Roll's diligent study and observation along these lines made him proficient in directing prospectors; and through his many years of experience on the trackless prairies while hunting, trapping and traveling, he never again was confused in direction or location.

Another account of a brother losing his way is recorded elsewhere.

An Unusual Ceremony.

It was over a year after the arrival of the Schultz family that an unusual wedding, minus the guests and entertainment, occurred.

The consent of Mam and Pap Schultz had been gained by Moses Billings before they left Indiana, that when their daughter Matilda was eighteen years of age she should be permitted to marry him. The parents thought delay and distance might change the plans of the young couple but they were mistaken.

The season of 1851 was a repetition of rains—or downpours—each one seemingly more copious than the one before it. On the little patch of planet represented by our settlement the expanse of water seemed greatly to exceed the extent of land and the mud was increased proportionately in depth.

The inhospitable attitude of nature did not deter nor defer the journey of Moses to the land of promise. The young man covered every rod of the way from Iowa City on foot—if swimming the streams may be called traveling on foot. In a bedraggled condition but with a hopeful heart Billings arrived at the Schultz cabin and asked the parents of "Tilly" to redeem their promise.

They were as good as their word and signified their wililngness for the wedding to take place; but how was the ceremony to be performed? An ocean of water rolled between the couple and Elder Woods. Marital happiness was almost within their grasp but it was dangerously risky to undertake crossing the river in a dugout.

Young Billings, from the bank opposite the mill site, shouted to the boatman on our side of the river. He explained the situation and requested that the young minister be brought across to officiate at the wedding. The situation was explained to the preacher.

Elder Woods was a good man. His life had been blameless and he was not afraid to die but he flatly refused to tempt fate or to fly in the face of providence by making the precarious trip in a canoe. He, however, accompanied father to the bank opposite the impatient young man and stated his objections.

Moses sat down among the willows to think over his defeat. Silence reigned and the heavens wept profusely. Father and Woods were preparing to return home when a joyous shout arrested their attention. The resourceful Billings, who had covered the hundreds of miles of distance to gain the right to call a young girl his wife, was not to be turned from his purpose. He proposed that he bring his intended to the vantage ground then occupied by

him and requested that Elder Woods ask the essential questions from the opposite bank.

The arrangement was approved by the minister. The young lady was led to the water's edge and the numerous members of her family arranged themselves beside and behind the contracting couple. The questions and responses were shouted across the watery expanse and Matilda Schultz was declared to be the wife of Moses Billings.

When the rains had ceased and the waters receded the young pair began the return trip to Indiana.

Recalling this romantic incident I must also state that I do not know what documents were necessary for the satisfaction of legal demands, or whether any papers were essential under the circumstances. The unusual occurrence and the apparently happy termination of the episode crowded out any questioning or remembrance of the whys and wherefores from my mind.

Other early weddings included the names of Stanley-Drought, already recorded; Lyon-Holmes; Prime-Stanley; Haviland-Kent; Wheeler-Snyder, and Frakes-Brewer.

Sill-Brassfield Wedding Trip.

The marriage of Martha Sill and George Brassfield does not hold first place in pioneer records, but the prenuptial trip was a long and perilous one. The couple eloped soon after the removal of Major Brassfield's family to Liberty, Wright county.

There had been an unusually "wet spell." The river was out of its banks and the day set for the departure promised to be a dismal one. The prospective bride spent the night with the Brassfield girls as she had done many times before. She arose early and, supposedly, departed for her home. The groom-to-be, still earlier, had declared his intention of setting out on a hunting trip.

The young couple repaired to the meeting-place. The vehicle of transportation—a log canoe—was launched in

the Boone river near Goldfield, and the two passengers made the lonely, hazardous voyage to our town. The start was made before daybreak and the pair disembarked after nightfall at the Brewer creek bluff south of our city. Shelter at the George Cooper cabin was gratefully accepted and the next day the young couple were united in marriage.

The fathers of the eloping couple followed them to Webster City. They found, however, that the journey had been made safely and the matrimonial knot tied, so they returned leisurely to their homes.

A gathering of enthusiastic settlers was called as an appreciation of the skill and endurance of the young man who manipulated a dugout through twenty-five or thirty miles of flood-waters, and as a tribute to the courage of the young woman who trusted her life to the keeping of her lover.

This unusual wedding-trip has been related with much amusement and interest for nearly sixty years.

Early Births.

The birth of Bryant Brewer, in 1848, already has been recorded. On the seventeenth of March, 1848, there was born into the Hook's Point household of Major Brassfield a daughter. After our arrival, the little girl was named for father. She was called Sevilla Wilson Brassfield. Emma, daughter of Sevilla, and my daughter Harriet have been life-long, intimate friends. The June season of roses marked the arrival of Bobbie, Jr., at the home of Robert Palmer, at Bone's mill site; and in the early autumn, a son was born to Nathan Stanley and wife—the couple who were newly married before our departure from the East.

The first child born in this section of the Boone valley was Leander Brewer, a brother. He arrived soon after our permanent location at Newcastle, early in 1850. He survived only a few months. Twin sons were born at the home of Jim Jenkins in the fall of 1850. They were christened Nathan and Newman. Franklin Palmer and Billie Brewer

came to Mrs. Bob Palmer and Mrs. Bill Brewer early in 1851. Somewhat later a daughter was born to John and Lucy Drought, the couple whose marriage has been mentioned in foregoing pages.

February, 1853, our own family was increased by the arrival of a male infant, William Granville Brewer, named for W. G. Berkley, a lawyer who had located in Homer. Just before the departure of Major Brassfield's family for Wright county, a son, Perry, was added to their numbers.

It would not have been necessary for pioneers to solicit settlers from other states except for the fact that twenty-one years are required to develop a citizen. The business of family-increase was given strict attention in our community, and quite as portly records were being made in adjacent settlements. I need only mention the names of Jack Mericle, George Goodrich, Lou Wolsey and Evelyn McKowan. Lou and George were born at Homer in 1853 and 1854. Evelyn was born at Lakin's Grove where the family sojourned temporarily awaiting her arrival. She grew to womanhood and was married to W. G. Brewer. A son of this couple, Edwin Brewer, resides south of our city. Walter Wilson Brewer, a brother, was born at the time of the first trip of the Wilson brothers to our city. He was made the namesake of Walt Wilson.

Early Deaths.

A brother, Leander Brewer, died in the month of August, 1850, and was buried on the south Superior street hill where father and other relatives later were laid to rest.

A few weeks after this death in our family the year-old son of Nathan Stanley died from the effect of a snake-bite. The child, who had been playing in the yard, crept into the cabin crying but could not explain his trouble. The mother soothed him to sleep but his arm soon began to swell and change color. The parents then realized what had happened but too late to counteract the poison. The child died before nightfall.

Uncle Billy Stanley passed away in the fall of 1851. His grave was made near the site of his homestead where we first located at Hope Hollow, or near Bone's mill site.

Fever and ague claimed its first victim in 1852. Maria Wheeler, daughter of Joe Wheeler, was a good chum of mine and her death was a personal loss to me.

The first wife of Henry Lott died before our arrival. Dates do not agree in different accounts. According to the chapter on "The Lott Tragedy," the time of her passing was the late winter of 1847 or the early part of 1848. The same chapter records the demise of the second wife of Henry Lott in 1853.

The death of Tom Mills and son in a prairie fire, the freezing of Bob Downing and Jim Jenkins, the accidental death of Luther Schultz and the account of Phil Jenkins' fatal encounter with a boar already have been written.

The death of my father was not an early one in the history of the town but a review of the circumstances which resulted in his death may be found in the chapter, "Biographical."

CHAPTER XIII.

Women's Work.

Our first stove was purchased some time after locating permanently. It was the high-oven, spider-legged make and was nicknamed the "step-stove." We used the cook stove very little, preferring the more laborious fireplace methods. While romping about the house the children clambered over the stove as they did over the loom, rafters and beds.

When there was a houseful of company or work being done which required all available floor space some of the children, say a yearling, a two year old, and a three year old were permitted to play on the bed. The billowy feather beds and pillows were soft and warm and were greatly appreciated even by older youngsters.

The new stove was one step up to the hearth level, a second step onto the griddle surface and still another and higher step to the top of the oven; hence, the "step-stove."

The purchase money for this cook-stove was procured by digging, drying and selling gentian roots. On the upland south of Brewer's creek, and in the Huddleston pasture grew the finest field of gentian that white man or Indian ever viewed. The season after our arrival we marketed enough of the plant roots to buy a set of delftware dishes—twenty-four each of cups, saucers and plates. We also gathered the wild indigo plant which was used for bluing.

The women-folk, in addition to the regular routine of water carrying, cooking, churning, sausage making, berry picking, vegetable drying, sugar and soap boiling, hominy hulling, medicine brewing, washing, nursing, weaving, sewing, straw platting, wool picking, spinning, quilting, knitting, gardening and various other tasks, found time to

exchange work with the neighbors and to search the fields and woods for herbs, roots and fruits for sale or home consumption.

Corn Dodger.

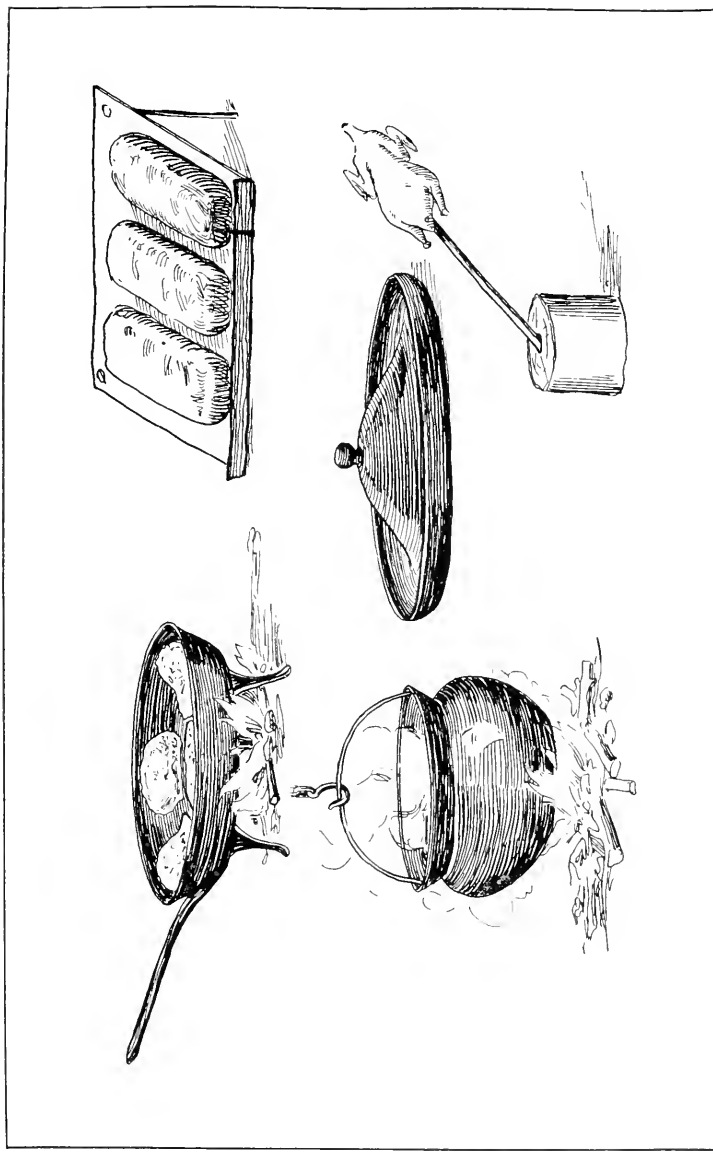
The use of milk or soda in preparing corn dodger was the exception instead of the rule. We sometimes used, in lieu of soda, the white ash residue from burned hard wood.

The dodger batter was mixed stiffer than we mix it today. Sometimes a few cracklings, a little goose-grease or venison fat was added for shortening. We separated the mass into leaves and patted them into shape. Four of them were placed around the edge of the skillet and one in the center. This arrangement allowed a better heat distribution than if baked in one cake.

The corn pone, a sweetened, raised cake was baked in the skillet in one mass. Mush and milk, or fried mush, were staples which recurred almost with diurnal persistence.

We used for baking corn dodger an iron skillet eighteen inches across, with legs three or four inches high. A bed of coals from the fireplace was raked out on the stone or clay hearth, and upon it the skillet was set. The iron cover, the edge of which was rolled upward about two inches, was placed over the skillet and live coals were heaped upon it. The top heat helped to brown the dodger on the upper side; if one top-supply of coals died out and did not suffice to finish the baking, another supply replaced it.

When there was company, which was nearly every day, one skillet of dodger was not enough, and we resorted to the more primitive method of baking. The desired number of extra patties was prepared and placed on a smooth board which was adjusted in a slanting position in front of the fireplace near enough to the flame to dry and brown the dodger. When dodger material ran low we mixed it with crushed acorns, but the bread was not relished. Later



DODGER SKILLET. BOILING POT. SKILLET COVER. BLOCK SPIT. SLANTING SLAB FOR BAKING.

we made an oat cake but with more hulls than meal it was not a gustatory success.

Corn, early in the fall before it was hard enough to grind in the coffee-mill, was reduced on a corn-grater—a piece of tin which had been perforated with a nail. During the immature, milky period of corn the grated meal was a sticky, pasty mass which soured very quickly and made fresh grating and baking necessary for every meal.

Buckwheat biscuit and flap-jacks frequently were on the breakfast menu. One pancake at a time was baked in the dodger skillet. So soggy were they that it was possible to carry to the table a leathery specimen doubled over a case-knife without cutting it in two.

Rolling Pin.

Salt-risin' and soda-biscuit were a better culinary success when baked in the cook-stove. For the biscuit, a new rolling-pin—a smooth pealed stick—was needed nearly every day. It had a way of disappearing known only to the smaller children. When it could not be found the biscuit dough was rolled with a fresh ear of corn—or, mayhap, the cob. Major Brassfield declared that three times a day, for more than seventy years, he ate hot corn bread or fresh soda biscuit dressed with sorghum, hog-grease or fowl-fat gravy. Cold dodger or yeast bread he would not eat.

A large cooking-kettle which was adjusted on the burning logs or swung over the flame from the mantel-hooks, served for meat, vegetables, succotash, dumplings or any other boiled-dinner preparations. Potatoes or eggs usually were baked among the embers, and roasting-ears were parched instead of boiled. If the pot "biled" over it made no difference.

The two or three gallon coffee-pot bubbled all day long on its nest of coals for the benefit of tired or belated hunters, but its contents often was only the liquor from boiled parched corn, rye or barley.

Crab-Apple and Plum Butter.

Wild plum or crab-apple butter were sweetened with sorghum or honey and were simmered in the every-day iron pot. For hours at a time I have manipulated the wooden or horn-spoon to prevent the burning of these delicacies. Scorching, however, could not have added a shade to their sable hue and their bitter sourness when finished would have caused a self-respecting pig to squeal had he condescended to taste them.

The stirring spoons and paddles were like the "now you see it, now you don't" trick. When they were lost a quick substitute was made from a flexible but tough switch, say a yard long. The ends were brought together, tied with a cord and wound like a handle until the loop at the center diminished to the proper size. These willow loops served very well for stirring gravy or soup. If greater strength or stiffness were necessary several whips were bound together in the loop-shape. Like nearly all articles without value this cooking assistant usually could be found when others of greater efficiency were irretrievably lost.

These willow wall-decorations also furnished an appetizing and a convenient roosting-place for flies.

Hominy.

The hulling of hominy required more labor, skill and diligent attention than many of the other tasks performed by the pioneer house workers. We timed hominy hulling so it did not conflict with the many busy days when the iron pots were being used.

The kettles were a little more than half filled with shelled corn. A medium-strength lye from the ash-leach was poured over it and the corn soaked until the tough hulls cracked and loosened.

The lye then was drained off and there ensued a long process of washing and stewing the corn through changes of waters to remove the hull and extract the lye. These wash-

ings, often in the icy water of the creek, induced swelling of the hands to an unnatural size, and they seemed to acquire an unusual weight. The lye water likewise contributed to my discomfort by eating the cuticle from hands and arms and the interval from one hulling to another was required to restore them to normal size and condition.

The hominy was clean and firm when finished and if cooked and served with the gravy from home-smoked ham it was greatly relished by our family and the Indians who occasionally ate with us. A kettle of hominy did not last very many days. Whenever the corn was in condition or the supply sufficient the preparation of hominy, practically, was continuous.

Sometimes in severe weather we soaked the corn, poured it in a coarse tow bag, and partially rubbed off the hulls on the washboard. We frequently were compelled, from pressure of other work and a long list of boarders, to cook corn without hulling it at all.

Vinegar.

A stone jar that carefully was handled throughout our journey from the East was the one which held the vinegar-plant. Our family never was without vinegar; and the "mother" brought with us supplied the neighbors with a start for their pickling requirements.

It was quite as essential that vinegar-"mother" be used for a starter as it was at that time thought to be necessary to supply a sick cow with a cud, or to slit and salt her tail as a remedy for hollow-horn.

Rain water and the late runs of maple-sap which became stringy were used for vinegar-liquor, and this was enriched by sugar-pot scrapings, sorghum settlings, "worked" preserves and discolored honey. In this congenial bath the vinegar-plant grew thick and tough and covered the upper surface of the sap. Shearing a piece from this "mother" as a nucleus for a neighbor's vinegar-jar was almost like cutting a piece of flesh.

Our vinegar-vat and pickle-barrel were covered with a tent cloth and pieces of slabs held the covering in place; nevertheless, the sage who said that "Vinegar never catches flies" was very much mistaken.

Vinegar pie—sweetened vinegar thickened with flour—was considered to be a great delicacy by the children. They, however, scarcely ever received a piece, for when the appetite of company and the grown-ups at home was appeased the supply was exhausted or at least greatly diminished. But for mother's care in cutting, serving and saving we would have missed many a toothsome tidbit from the table. Waiting until the second or third table-serving was the common fate of pioneer children.

Cane-Molasses.

Our supplies of maple sugar and wild honey made it unnecessary to pay immediate attention to growing sorghum. Our neighbors, however, never failed to plant a patch of sugar-cane.

The first molasses-mill that I remember was operated by Uncle Ike Lyon by the well known armstrong-power method. The rollers were fashioned from two pieces of log, each about eighteen inches long and eight inches through and they were barked and trimmed to a smooth surface. The rollers were arranged on end, one beside the other, in a slab frame. A windlass handle was geared from the top to work on either side so an extra man-power occasionally could be utilized.

The cane in the field was stripped, topped, cut, hauled to the mill in wood-racks and fed between the wooden rollers a few stalks at a time, or in quantities to approximate the strength of the turners. A wooden vat beneath the machine caught the cane-juice as it was pressed from the stalks. This thin-as-water liquid was boiled, and boiled, and boiled in the sap kettles and skimmed, and skimmed, and skimmed until almost nothing remained of the original quantity. The residue, however, was sweet and a bright

brown if not scorched; if burned the product was black, bitter, and a partial or total loss. A kettle of cane-juice yielded less than a gallon of finished sorghum.

Constant attention and consummate care were neccessary to produce quality in molasses. Simmering to finish the syrup was done over a very slow but uniform fire, with continuous stirring, to prevent scorching. The faces and hands of "molassy-paddlers" often were seared or burned to blisters, either from the heat or a mishap in handling. Every run of cane-juice made necessary a resetting of the grinder and rehanging of kettles, as the refuse of pressed stalks littered the mill-yard and the area about the kettles became a trampled, gummy, sticky mass of dirt, leaves, grass, moss and molasses-skimmings. The helpers prevented damage to boots or shoes by working in the surface muck barefooted but the frequent frosty mornings induced them to move at a double quick gait. The hand-power cane-mill soon was improved in construction. A third roller was added and a sweep—a pole with the proper curve—was attached to the center of the frame and made ox-power available.

Many of our citizens remember the double horsepower cane-mill operated by Uncle Benny Millard, at the site of Bing Howard's residence on South Superior and East Walnut streets. The equipment of this mill—the furnace arrangement, the shallow evaporating and simmering pans, the means for drawing off and barreling molasses—was the most complete and efficient ever brought to this town. My education in the art of making sorghum was acquired in Uncle Benny's mill. Farmers from miles around brought their cane to be ground and boiled down into molasses. Great ricks were piled about the mill and the pressed stalks materially helped to fill the slough at the foot of the hill.

The price of molasses, notwithstanding the work of raising cane and the care required to produce salable syrup was from twenty to twenty-five cents per gallon.

Hundreds of household brooms were made from the heads of cane-stalks which had been stripped of their seeds.

Preparation of Pumpkin.

The Yankee Red and Spotted Sweet were the varieties of pumpkins raised by us. Pie material, either for filling or crust, was not plentiful, although we have mixed some ingredients that would discount and discredit war substitutes. Pumpkin-butter, however, furnished a perennial supply for pie-filling.

A housewife who has superintended the stewing and simmering of fresh pumpkin for pies needs no reminder of care and time expended; but the time and care were doubled or trebled in simmering pumpkin-butter, as it was sweetened with molasses or honey and boiled down until it would keep in open crocks. The formation of a mouldy covering on the receptacles only indicated that the stuff was keeping—at least, it was not fermenting. Pumpkin-butter the same thickness as a slice of bread was the rule for sandwiches, and mother seemed always too liberal with the spreading. I did not like the pumpkin-butter.

The work of drying pumpkin was not so exacting as butter making but it was of longer duration. A cart load of pumpkins was dumped near the creek. They were rolled into the water and washed. If we were not pressed for time the pumpkins were peeled; otherwise, the rind was not taken off until winter when preparing for meals. The sections, moreover, held together better if unpeeled.

The pumpkin was cut in two in the middle the cross way of the grain and the seed cavity scraped out. Rings from these halves were cut from one-half to three-quarters of an inch thick and strung on poles. Hickory sticks long enough to reach from one overhead cabin beam to another supported hundreds of the pumpkin-rings. The small ends and broken pieces were thrown into receptacles and in the evening the whole family helped to string them on cords as apples were prepared for drying, later. Without exag-

geration, the cabin ceiling-space was entirely decorated with the drying pumpkin-rings and festoons. The sticks holding the large rings were arranged in the back part of the space and the small-sized rings at the front, so tall members of the family or visitors would not have to stoop in passing under them.

Late dried pumpkin did not cure so rapidly as that prepared in warmer weather; but the fly proposition had to be considered. It is safe to say, with our best efforts expended in "shooing" them out and sleeping with open doors, that several millions of flies absorbed their meals from drying pumpkin for a greater or less number of days—until they were frozen out. The dried product was soaked and stewed after the supply of pumpkin-butter was exhausted.

Pumpkin-rings always were put into the cooking-pot with the boiled dinner. If an unbroken section reached the table the youngster with the least table manners fished it from the platter. With one end in his fingers, and head tipped backward the strip of pumpkin was held above the mouth and the gourmand seemed to swallow the whole piece without chewing.

Early pumpkin yields on the virgin soil of Iowa were phenomenal, and consumption did not fall below the supply.

Wild Grapes.

Wild grapes also were dried by us but there absolutely was nothing left of them when finished but skin, seeds and an intense sourness. Elderberries, likewise, receive drying attention and when mixed with the grapes furnished some substance for sauce or pies, but in my humble judgment, mixing them accentuated the worthlessness of both.

Fresh grapes put down in open jars, a layer of grapes and a layer of maple sugar, were relished by all if they were kept well cooled. If fermentation took place the juice was pressed out and used for wine or vinegar.

Pie Baking.

Pies were baked in the dodger skillet or on plates which were set inside the skillet, and the lid covered with coals. If the bottom crust did not bake properly it was removed from the skillet, loosened about the edge of the plate, another plate was placed on top of the pie and all turned bottom side up. The first plate then was taken away and the pie replaced in the skillet until finished. Pie-crust usually was made from biscuit-dough and the above operation was not difficult. We preferred the skillet-pie as it was larger and the internal compartment could be filled to repletion.

Wild-gooseberries were not good drying material but during their season they were greatly relished for pies notwithstanding the inconvenience of picking and preparing. The prickly variety was not so sour as the smooth-skins hence their preference. The gooseberry bushes were studded thickly with briars and the prickly-berry itself was quite as profusely covered with stickers. Many of the gatherers wore mittens while picking. The berries were placed in a tow-bag and rolled or kneaded on the puncheon floor until the needle-like points were broken.

Gooseberry pie was baked without sugar but a thickened, sweet dip was prepared and poured over it when served. Often sweetened milk was used as a dressing. We doubtless were usurping the prerogative of the pigs but we relished the mixed mess and lived through the inflictions of indigestible preparations.

A lusty-growing gooseberry thicket was a fine sight but it was one of the problems of the pioneer with the grubbing hoe.

Spitted Pheasants.

Our bow and arrow huntsman one day brought home a brace of fat pheasants which he dressed for himself and placed on the open-tined roasting-spit at the fireplace. While we women were busy elsewhere Lockjaw, the bull-

dog, came into the cabin and appropriated one of the birds for his supper. The theft soon was discovered but knowing the dog never relinquished his hold on anything until it was dead or devoured we did not contest his possession of the pheasant.

A wild turkey we dressed and prepared for roasting in the usual way. A twisted cord was tied to his legs and fastened to the iron bar over the fire. The whirling motion browned him uniformly as the cord untwisted. The fire sometimes became too hot and the bird was charred by the blaze, in which case the string usually burned in two and the turkey had to be pulled from the ashes and coals and rehung.

The fireplace roasting process was not a satisfactory one. The juicy drippings were caught in the dripping-pan for gravy but the meat was rendered dry and unsavory. The string-hanging method was employed only when game was too large to be boiled in the pot or dodger skillet. When a fowl had reached such proportions it was so old and tough that even modern methods of cookery could not have modified its texture or taste.

Ham Roasting.

I recollect on one occasion I was instructed to prepare and roast a venison ham during mother's absence. I decided that it was an auspicious time for play. I prepared the ham but instead of the usual twisted string the dog chain was ultilized as a hanger. While this method did not furnish the rotary motion, I figured that it could be changed about occasionally and obviate the necessity for constant vigilance to prevent the string burning episodes. Happily I hitched the leg of venison to one end of the chain and the other end was attached to the cooking-bar over the fireplace. The crackling hickory logs were prodded, a fresh supply of fuel added, and I betook myself to the barnyard to participate in the sport with the younger children.

We played I spy, mumblety-peg, stalked about on forked-stick stilts, shinned up the trees, bent limbs for a

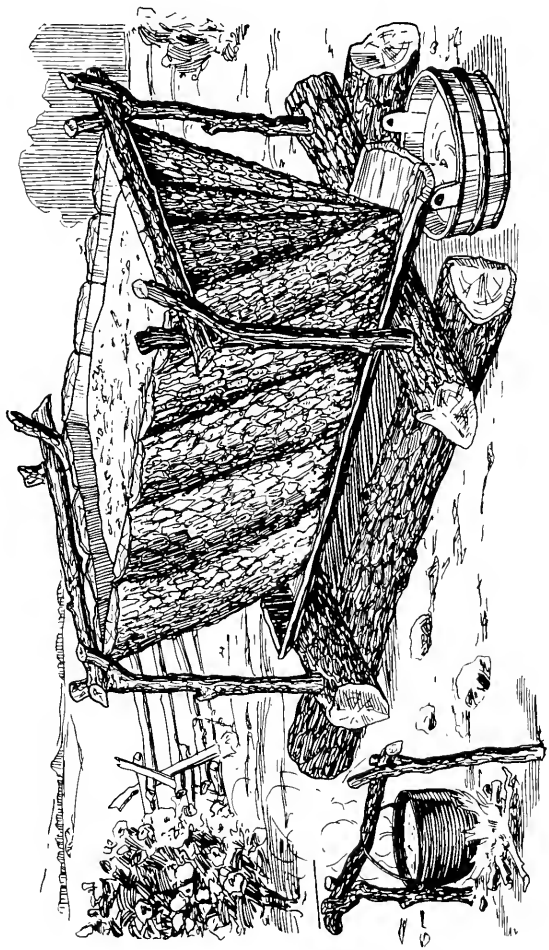
teeter, climbed on and jumped off the stable roof, and in the excitement I forgot the admonitions of my mother and the needs of the stomach. Racing around the haystack I happened to turn toward the cabin and beheld great volumes of smoke issuing from the open door. I dashed forward in terror that the house was on fire, but as I came near, the odor of burning flesh offered the explanation. I knew before entering that the fine fat ham was burned to a cinder. Fortunately there was no inflammable material near the fireplace; and—fortunately for me—father did not beat his children.

Soft Soap.

Soft soap making, as we knew it, now is nearly a lost art. The next necessary structure after a cabin had been provided for the family was an ash-leach. Six-foot pieces of puncheon were framed into V-shape. The point, one foot from the ground, terminated in a slab-trough which carried off the lye. The leach was filled with hardwood ashes and water was poured upon it. The resulting seepage was a dark-colored, acrid, corrosive lye which we handled carefully or suffered severe burns from contact with the liquid.

Lye was considered to be the proper strength if an egg floated on its surface or if, when a feather was dipped into it, the barbs slipped easily from the shaft. The lye when boiled with a sufficient quantity of grease or refuse of flesh made excellent soft soap although the often mouldy, ill-smelling mass was not calculated to encourage the soap-maker.

Our stent in the soap line was about three barrels during the season. The first batch, made from selected soap-grease, was reserved for toilet use. "All was grist that came to our mill." Venison and mutton-tallow, the skin and trimmings of meat, fat from the hides or pelts of smaller varmints, likewise the "riddled" intestines of animals were utilized. The latter were prepared by ripping



PIONEER ASH LEACH.

them open with a bowie-knife and washing them in the creek.

Empty soap barrels were used as receptacles for soap-grease until the next soap-making season which was whenever the supply ran short. If the shortage occurred when we did not have sufficient soap-grease for a fresh batch we killed a couple of pigs for the purpose. Housewives felt as much pride in taking off a nice batch of soft soap as they did in the conscientious preparation of other creature comforts.

When the youthful back was nearly broken with turning the grindstone to sharpen axes, grub-hoe, briar-scythe, adz, frow, draw-shave, wedges, etcetera, relief was gained by smearing soft soap on the frictional points. Occasionally we ran short of tar-grease and a substitute for lubricating the wagon wheels was found by applying soft soap to the hubs. Also, I suppose there was some mutual soft-soaping among neighbors and visitors. Soft soap was not used exclusively for washing purposes. It was a favorable as well as a sinister agent.

It remained for Mam Jenkins to make the left-handed use of soft soap. Instead of hickory-oil or birch-buds as truth-persuaders, whenever a youngster was found to have told a fib a spoonful of soft soap was placed in his mouth and retained long enough for the lye to have a biting effect upon the tongue. Mrs. Jenkins loudly praised and defended her treatment but she made no converts to soap-doping, perhaps because the mothers did not wish to waste the washing material. Father declared that if everyone who stretched the truth were soft-soaped not even Mam Jenkins would be left to administer the dose.

The process of soap making kept the hands clean for the time, at least, and it was necessary to keep the finger-nails closely pared. The trimming usually was done by the following rule: "Cut them on Monday for health; cut them on Tuesday for wealth; cut them on Wednesday for news; cut them on Thursday for shoes; cut them on Friday for sorrow; cut them on Saturday, joy on the morrow; cut

them on Sunday for evil, for all the next week you'll be ruled by the devil." Usually girls chose Saturday for fingernail clipping as it was understood that "joy on the morrow" meant the presence of a chosen young man.

Washing.

The work of washing for a large family, and transients, was not a light undertaking. My mother was kept constantly busy with the manufacture of household articles and the work of converting raw clothing material into finished raiment. I was the oldest girl so the weight of the common housework fell upon me.

A great pile of dirty garments—and I use the word dirty instead of soiled advisedly—was collected at the end of the week. The rule was once a week change whether it was necessary or not, and if one happened to get a wetting and it wasn't Saturday, he managed to survive.

Upon the stake-supported hickory pole was hung the water-filled iron kettles and a fire was built beneath them. One vessel was used for "breaking"—softening the water with lye—in the other the clothes were boiled. I am sure all will agree that without the liberal use of soft soap there would have been little effect upon such garments as hunting shirts and jeans britches. Had anyone then suggested the use of black goods or lighter weight material for men's working shirts he would have been loudly ridiculed.

Our clothes line was the rail fence; and the gooseberry bushes about the premises, likewise, were decorated with wearing apparel. A second round at the tubs the same day was not infrequent. If the garments became loosened from their moorings at the fence the hogs or dogs never failed to find and trample or wallow on them. We were glad, under such circumstances, if the clothes were found intact and not torn or chewed into strings.

Quilts or heavy bedding were placed in a barrel and covered with a liberal supply of water and strong soft soap. These articles were "tromped out" by the bare-footed oper-

ator, instead of being rubbed by hand. Occasionally I could induce one of the boys, by the promise of an extra dinner dish, to help with the tramping but they did not like the skin-puckering and tender-foot effect after the work was done. Fortunately going barefooted toughened and protected the skin somewhat.

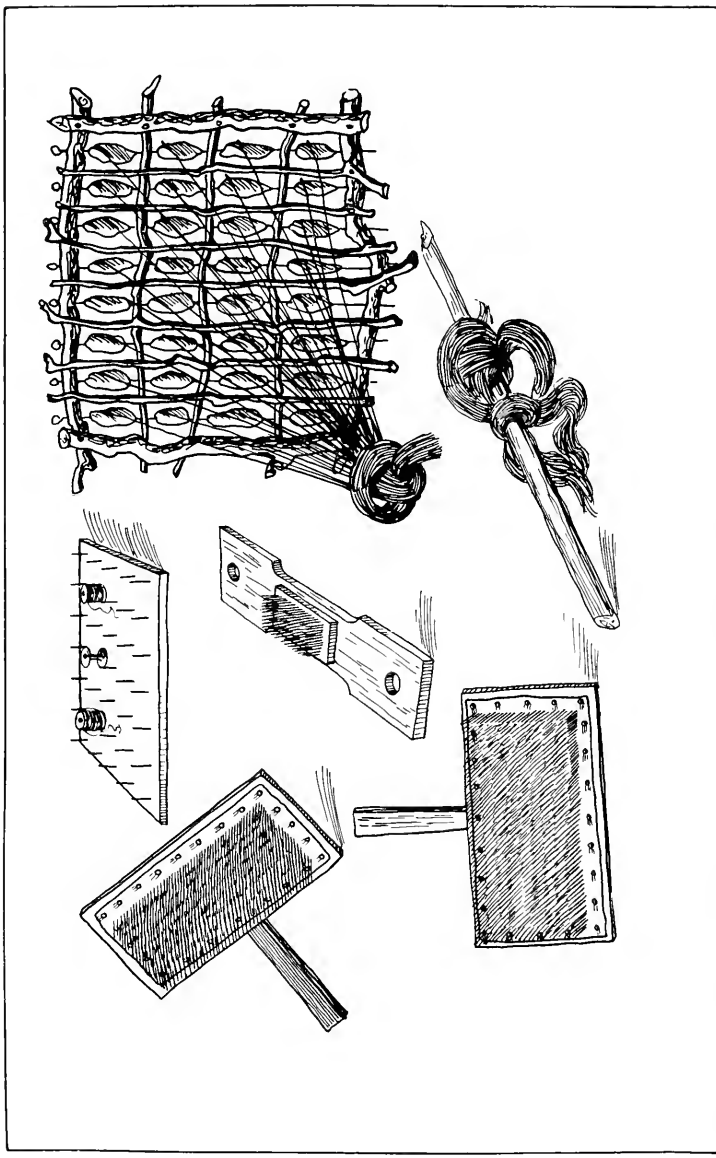
Changing the routine of kettle work was none too pleasant, for pot-cleaning then was necessary. Especially was this true at the "sugarin' off" season and after honeycomb had been melted and cooled for beeswax. The wax could not be removed except when the kettle was hot. I yet am unable to formulate a reason why I was not disfigured or burned to death while performing such heavy and dangerous work at the edge of, and over an open fire.

A young woman who was eligible to accept the attentions of the opposite sex could tell when she was to catch a beau, because of the unusual number of burs and brambles collected on her dress tail while working about the yard. It was a sure sign that a beau was due if a portion of the dress hem happened to become turned upward. It was, however, impossible to work about the premises or clamber over fences without acquiring the "beau sign," but the girl aspirant for honors was in danger of losing her chance of marriage if she were so careless as to step over the broom or mop in the presence of the young man, or if she made the beds unevenly.

Preparation of Flax.

When flax began to turn yellow at the base, it was pulled and left in the field a day or two to dry. Seed was collected by pulling the stalks through the ripple—a plank with wooden or wire teeth. The flax then was bundled into beats, arranged in tepee shape, tied at the top and kept dampened until rotting began and softened the fibre.

The stalks then were dried and broken on a flax-brake, and swingled—hacked with a dull knife. It was not always practicable to use approved kinds of flax-machines.



SPOOL HOLDER. WOOL CARDS. FLAX HETCHEL. HANK OF YARN. WARPING BARS.

Many times they were out of repair or loaned to the neighbors. My mother often threshed small quantities of flax across the back of a chair or bench, or it was pounded with any implement at hand.

The woody bun, shives and remnants of bark, in the orderly process of manipulation, were removed. The strikes, or cleared fibres, were given a second round at the break—the heavy, flat, cog-fitting blocks for bruising. The mass was moistened and hetcheled with the wire combs and the long fibres were drawn out from the tow residue and refuse.

Several hetchelings—the more the finer—were necessary, and much sorting or drawing of fine and coarse fibres to produce the desired choice threads for spinning. The bulk of material at length was ready to be rolled about the distaff on the small spinning-wheel.

Spinning.

Foot-power, by means of a treadle, drove the wheel. With moistened and deft fingers the spinner held the twisting, lengthening, evening cord as it ran in a thin line to the bobbin. The thread then was wound on the reel, into knots of, say, forty or more strands each, with perhaps twenty knots or lays to the skein. The number of threads in knot or skein varied, however. An automatic mechanism on the reel clicked when the set number of strands was wound and the operator then tied the marker for division of the skein.

The finished skeins were taken through a long and laborious process of bleaching and softening. They were soaked and boiled in "broke" water, washed, rinsed, dried and made ready to bobbin for the loom. More than a dozen handlings were necessary before flax was ready to be woven, and after the weaving it was boiled, and beaten, and bleached before it was ready for the needle.

Linen wearing apparel usually was made up in the natural color, and it was about worn out before it became

comfortably soft and pliable. Men's linen smocks and britches were worn without underclothing, and the proverbial hair-cloth shirt had little scratching advantage over the flax-fibre garments.

Flax refuse after the first hetcheling was spun and woven into coarse material for bags and tarpaulins. Ropes were made from the coarser refuse. The process of growing, preparing, spinning and weaving flax seemed almost to be a demonstration of perpetual motion for one season's work overlapped the cropping of the following year.

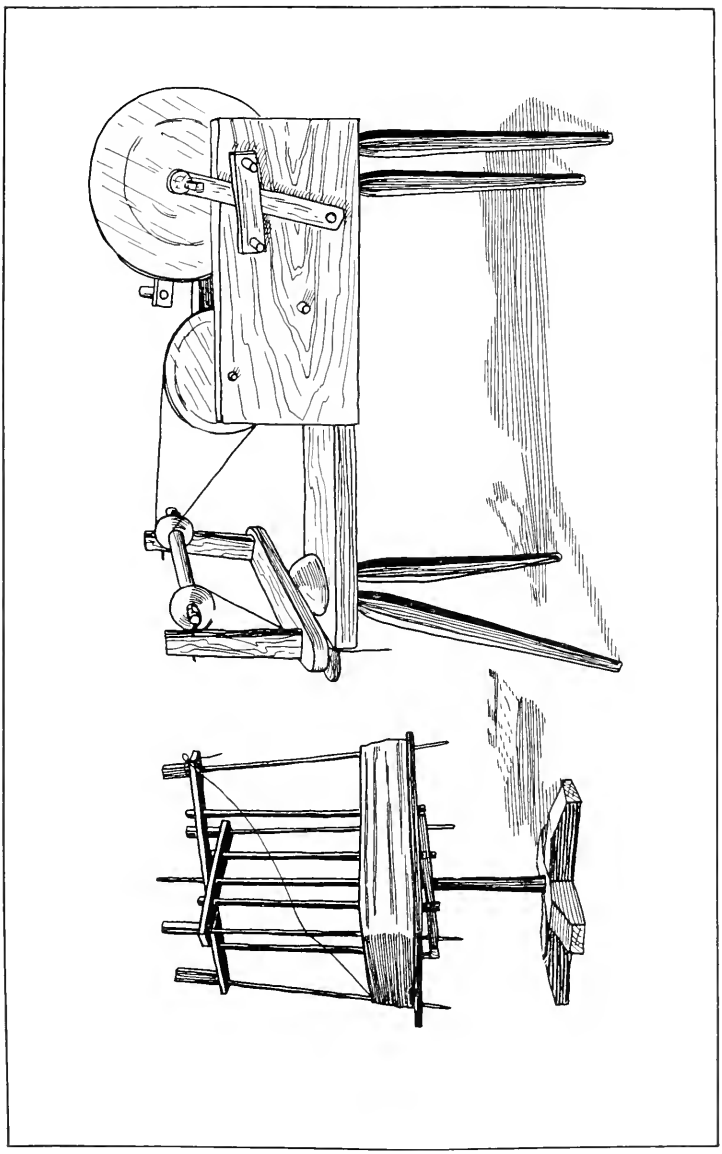
Spinning wheels always were carried among the early peddlers' supplies. The bulk was not great when knocked down and packed. All repairs were made at home except to the wheel itself. Skill in operating the spinning-wheel was acquired only after long and patient practice but the work was alluring and satisfying to the spinner.

Preparation of Wool.

It fell to my lot to pluck the coat or dead wool from sheep that died from exposure or accident. The fact that a sheep's carcass had lain until it was swollen, discolored and flyblown did not justify us in discarding the wool. Conservation and frugality were our watchwords all along the line.

Fleeces from the dead sheep were washed and marked, and with those periodically sheared, were sent East to be prepared for spinning. Consignments of wool were mixed bunches of bags and bundles with coverings of old quilts or petticoats secured with tow strings and buckskin bands, or pinned together with the immense thorns which grew abundantly in briar-thickets and on thornapple trees. Supplies of wool often ran short, however, and the work was done at home.

Washing wool before it was shorn from the sheep did very little good but it was done. Wool-pickings, for me, were long to be remembered tasks. This clearing the refuse, burs and other foreign substances from wool was an



PRIMITIVE WHEEL.

WINDING BLADES.

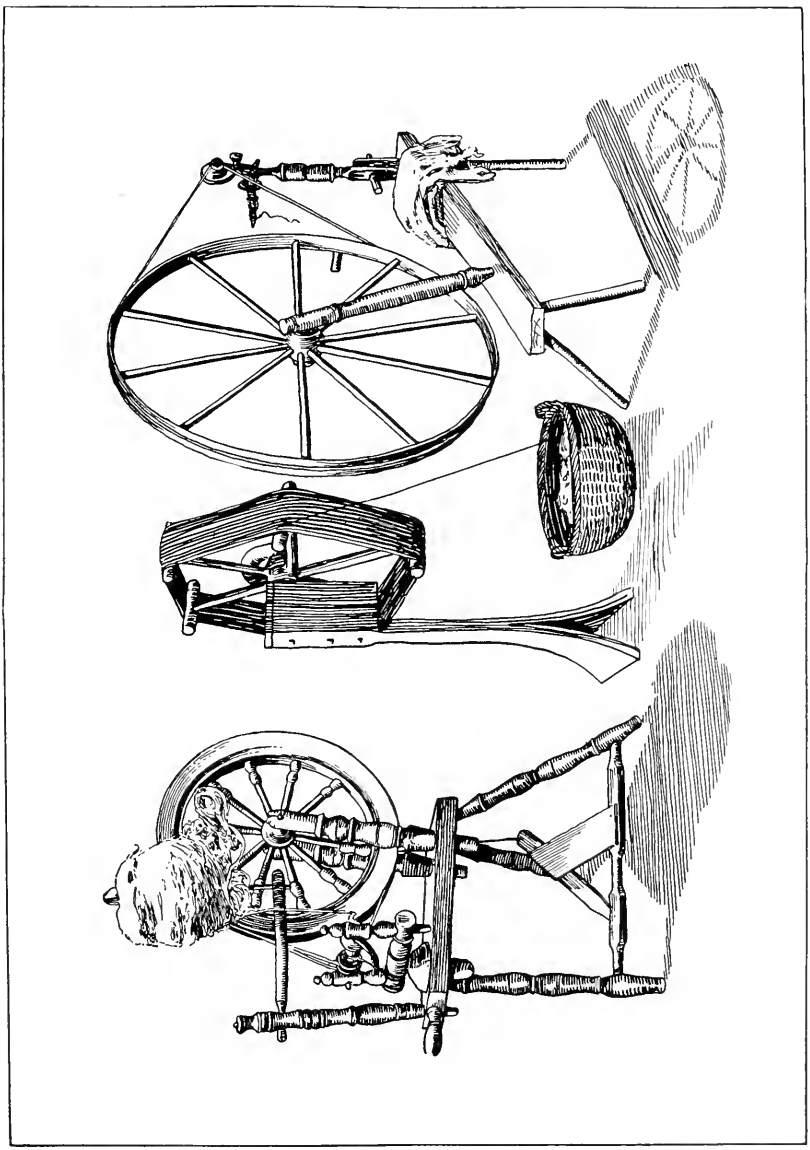
occasion for getting together by the neighbors. Wool-pickings were in the lists with quilting and sewing-bees which were arranged simultaneously with wood-choppings, log-rollings or cabin-raisings, and these affairs were celebrated with an evening party.

Wool cards were fashioned from thin flat boards, say, six by twelve or more inches, with the handle extending from the center and on a line with the flat surface. The card-face was studded like the wire-tooth currycomb, with slightly bent steel teeth. The carder sat down. In her left hand she held one of the wool-cards flat on her knee with teeth up, and spread a bit of material on it. The right hand card was drawn across the other until the wool-fibres were straightened and parallel. They then were carefully removed from the teeth and deftly turned or tummed between the backs of the cards and the fluffy rolls were formed about a finger size.

When a quantity of material was ready for spinning, an end of a roll was fastened into the spindle-slit. The spinner took hold of the long slender roll at a point which she estimated would lengthen to the desired size for yarn at the one drawing. A quick turn of the wheel, and the soft wool stretched as the spinner stepped backward two or three paces. When the rotation of the wheel had twisted the roll to the desired size and firmness, the operator briskly retraced her steps as the yarn was wound upon the spindle. Another section of the wool-roll was taken between the fingers as before, and the process repeated.

The reel, as its name indicates, was used to skein the yarn from the spindle. If pressure of work would not permit use of the ungeared wheel for the winding, or if visitors made extra implements necessary, the home-made niddle-noddle—a hand-winder with center bar and a cross piece on either end—was used, and yarn was skeined from end to end crossing in the middle and knotted with the usual loop of yarn into so many threads each.

When a skein was finished it was placed on the swifts or winding-blades and quilled—wound on headless spools,



FLAX WHEEL. REEL. WOOL WHEEL.

or sections of pithless elderwood—ready for the woof-weaving shuttle; or the yarn was wound on larger spools or corncobs ready for the warping-bars, as the case required. For immediate use yarn was skeined from hand to elbow and hung from the arm while being knitted.

Weaving.

Loom-frames and ordinary fixtures were made by the men folks. The frame was about five or six feet, with six foot posts. The corners were fitted and pinned with wooden pegs which could be driven out and the loom removed when not in use. Our loom often was lent to the neighbors. We brought with us from the East the cloth and warp-beams, reeds, shuttles and other parts which required nicety of mechanical execution in making.

Reels, swifts and winding blades were susceptible of more or less modification in form and material. They were rigged with gearing, or with hand-cranks; with movable joints, or with holes in the frames for extension or contraction to accommodate the different sizes of skeins. Warping-bars were heavy, six feet square frames of peeled poles and wooden pegs. They hung from a fence post when not in use.

The filled spools or corn cobs wound from the skeining accessories were set in the spool holder in rows, on pins which held but allowed them to turn freely as the yarn was warped on the bars. The number of spools varied according to the width of cloth to be woven. If yarn was fine, several warpings were necessary to fill the reed. The thread-ends of warp from the spools were gathered in the hand, carried to and fastened on a wooden pin at the top of one of the bars. The warp was drawn across to the opposite bar pin; and the work continued back and forth to the bottom of the frame. The course then was retraced to the starting point, or until a sufficient length of yarn was unwound for the length of cloth to be woven. A little extra warp was allowed for possible shrinkage.

A group of warp-threads was called a bout, and the bouts were carefully wound on the warp beam by turning it with the pole-lever at one end of the roller. The rake—a bar set with many wooden pegs—helped materially in keeping the bouts of warp from getting out of place and becoming tangled. Notwithstanding, before a weaving was finished the threads often became hopelessly criss-crossed; and "picking back the rods"—slats which were slipped between the alternating threads in front of the warp-beam—was an almost constant occupation for the half-growns.

When beamed, the bouts—a thread at a time—were brought forward and thumbed or, with a harness-hook, pulled through two sets of harness-eyes. The many singles which composed the harness were arranged at about the center of the loom space on the inch-wide heddle-bars, which were suspended from the top by pulleys. The bars were in a horizontal position. The lower ones were fastened to the treadles below, and the harness hung vertically between them.

Harness making was done on an open, removable-end frame about a foot wide and the length for easy handling, with an inch wide strip of wood through the central space. One frame-end was held between the knees of the worker. A waxed tow-thread was looped over one of the frame-bars. The extension of thread was carried to the center-bar and a knot tied on either side of it. This loop formed the harness-eye. The thread was extended to the other frame-bar and tied, taut, at its outer edge. The frame-end was removed and the finished harness was slipped off. The number of harness varied with the width of cloth.

The warp-threads, after being harnessed, were drawn, with a reed-hook, through the reed which was set in the batten—two threads between each reed. They then were brought forward over the breast beam, spread out, turned under and backward, and fastened to the knee-beam, or cloth roller. Warp could be saved by attaching the ends to an old piece of cloth for extension over the breast-beam

to start the new work to rolling on the cloth-beam, which was operated with crank and ratchet.

Reeds were fine or coarse as the case required. There were two parallel bars of wood, about four inches apart and about four feet long. Between the bars were set the reeds which resembled the teeth of a comb. The reed was slipped into its grove in the batten, or beater, which was a swaying beam attached with side-bars to a rocking axle at the top of the loom. The reed in the swinging batten served to beat the woof firmly as it was woven by the operator.

Fastened to the loom-beams or to the floor, so it could not slip backward, was a high bench on which sat the weaver. One foot pressed a treadle. One set of harness and the alternate threads were depressed below the others, across the width of the warp. The shuttle was thrown from one side to the other through the shed, or opening between the alternate warp-threads. The reed-batten was swung, and forced the woof firmly into place. The other foot-treadle was pressed as the first was released, and the second set of harness crossed down the opposite, alternate warp-threads, and the work continued. If designs were woven, several sets of harness were used and many di:erent colored bobbin-windings were necessary; but we did very little fancy weaving after leaving Indiana. We were fortunate if we kept enough plain material for immediate necessities.

Loom-temples, or tenter-hooks, were two or three inch wide strips of wood, with a center adjustment for shortening or lengthening in accordance with the width of cloth. In both ends were set several steel teeth. The breaking-joint at the middle was loosened, the end teeth were inserted in the selvage, the temples spread to a length for firmly holding the cloth at an even width, and they were pressed flat and fastened with a wooden button.

The work of carpet weaving was identical with that of cloth except for the coarseness of warp and filling. The bobbins and shuttles for cloth were too small for carpet

use so simple slats with notched ends were wound with carpet rags and ultized instead of shuttles, although the motion was much slower. The brilliant and vari-colored, striped rag carpets were a delight to the eye. The "hit and miss" possessed the same quality of durability with the added advantage of using up all kinds of material.

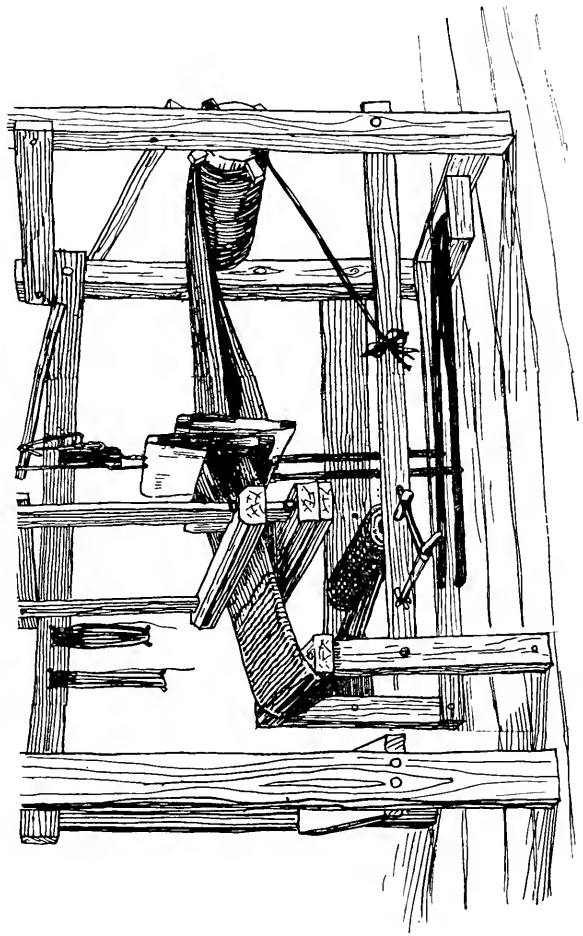
Great satisfaction was evinced by women who produced unusual smoothness in texture, or accuracy in design when weaving either woolen or linen cloth. The fabric woven in linen warp and wool filling became the jeans for trousers. It sold freely among families whose members were less proficient weavers. The yellow or brown checked material was called linsey-woolsey, and also found ready sale.

One might think that homespun and home-woven linen sheets and towels would be indestructible, that they would wear indefinitely, but the old articles constantly were being replaced by new ones. If we wished to insure long life to a linen consignment, the filling was dampened before weaving. This method, however, made the cloth all but unmanageable in the wash tub, and about as good as a board for a towel.

All clothing was seamed with the hand back-stitch and with tow-thread, which hung in a loosely braided skein about the sewer's neck. When the strands were clipped the threads were a convenient needle length. A bunch of tow furnished household cord. It was twisted by grandpap and the toddlers.

We did not use the small hand looms or frames for bands, suspenders or shoelaces. The former ornamentation was platted as we braided straw for hats. For the latter we used buckskin, and galluses were knitted with coarse yarn.

Spinning-wheels always were decorated with hanks of yarn, bunches of tow or rolls of wool ready for instant use. Visitors never were idle. Women either brought an apronful of wool or flax to be cleared and sorted, or at once offered their services to mother for any available work.



OLD-TIME LOOM.

Spinning and knitting were the perennially unfailing challenge for assistance. The buzzing hum of the wheels or the busily flying fingers did not detract from the social enjoyment of the producers of useful material.

The "spinster" still is honored with kindly remembrance in the effort to perpetuate the art of spinning. I bow in wondering contemplation of the tireless workers, who with peaceful resignation and conscientious devotion performed these painstaking pioneer duties.

Goose Plucking.

Goose plucking was an occasion of pleasure and hilarity quite as impatiently awaited as the date for the present day circus or menagerie. Instead of penning the geese at night we chased each victim about the premises until caught. A personal and strenuous encounter usually was experienced with the ganders of the flock. They gave battle with bills and wings while vociferously screaming and hissing, but when overpowered and plucked they, in disgust and humiliation, sought shelter for their half-naked bodies and refuge from the curious gaze of members of the flock whose smooth, shining coats of feathers were undisturbed.

Goose plucking was done by the women. The bird was grasped firmly by both feet, turned upon his back and the breast feathers removed. The work was carefully done to prevent tearing the skin and injuring the flesh of the fowl. We did not pull the back covering, for if heavy rains came on while unprotected by feathers, the geese did not thrive.

When the quill ends of plucked feathers were dry and shining they were "ripe." Early hatched geese were relieved of their feathers four times during the season. If one-half pound of feathers per goose was saved from the four scrimmages we were well satisfied with the yield of pillow and bed-filling material.

Sixty years ago the young woman of marriageable age who was unprovided with at least one or two feather beds

as her contribution to household furnishing was considered to be somewhat improvident if not downright shiftless.

Garden Seeds; Storage.

The exchange of garden seeds among the neighbors was an indication that spring was approaching. Every cabin was a seed-house; and each parcel was known by the wrapping or its particular color or kind of string. Seeds were stored in piggins and the various sized gourds of which we raised an abundant supply.

Large, small, medium and immense-sized gourds decorated the inside walls of the cabin and hung alongside the stretched and drying animal pelts on the outside. The natural growth of gourds into shapes convenient for household handling, after being trimmed and cleared of seeds, made them very useful where kitchen utensils were not numerous. The calabash, dipper and sugar-trough gourds were of greatest utility.

The paunch of an animal, after being cleared, cleaned and dried, made a good hunter's canteen, or with a larger opening and a rawhide puckering-string it served as a receptacle for seeds or other dry material for storage.

The safe storage of seeds from the raids of rats and mice was next to impossible. Daily handling and watchfulness was our only hope, but many night marauders accomplished their work of destruction. If all the members of a family went visiting for a day they were fortunate if the pumpkin-seed supply had not disappeared or been destroyed by the rodents during their absence. The only safe place for seeds was inside the covered stone-jars or crocks but they induced dampness and mould, besides we did not have enough of them for our manifold needs.

Quilt Designs.

There was a commendable reciprocity in the exhibition and distribution of new patchwork quilt designs. The display was made with quite as much pride as is the showing

of artistic fancy-work today. All plans, patterns, ideas or innovations were pleasantly passed along for community use, and sent to distant friends by mail or by travelers. This was true, likewise, of clothing cutting. Exclusiveness in the cut or trim of apparel was unthought of. Individuality in dress could not be maintained, and a new style was worn somewhat as it is today, regardless of the embonpoint or sylph-like proportions of the wearer.

The patchwork bed cover was sewn to the quilting frames and suspended from the overhead beams by ropes attached at the four corners. Under this canopy was a fine playhouse for the children, and many pricked fingers have resulted from bobbing heads beneath the quilt.

When the quilters were not at work the quilt was hoisted above our heads by winding the ropes about the crossed frame-ends. The youngsters tossed their playthings into the sagging receptacle, and if several days elapsed between quilting-times, the lost and found department was established. A quilt was well seasoned with smoke and dust before it was finished and one scarcely was removed from the rack before another was put on.

The quilters' fingers often were in a chronic state of tenderness from needle prickings. The women, to obviate this condition, seared the forefinger and thumb on a hot poker before beginning operations. Buckskin thimbles were worn. Quilts were generously used for bundling and wrapping up when traveling.

The fancy-work of today does not discredit the needlework done in the candle light by hard working pioneer women sixty years ago.

The "hope box" of the past generation was a chest full of homespun and home-woven cloth, patchwork quilts and wool-padded comforters.

Straw Platting.

Straw-platting for home-made hats was done entirely by the women-folk. If straw was cut after the grain had

headed—when changing color from green to yellow but not ripe enough to be brittle—it would retain its pliability for a long time; and if dampened before using, could be manipulated easily. A braid, usually of seven to eleven strands of oat or wheat-straw, whichever material was more plentiful or in the better condition, made a plat the most convenient working width.

The sewing of the straw-trips began in the middle of the crown and the hat was rudely shaped as it progressed. Two hats apiece was reckoned as a starter. The second, or Sunday hat, was expected to last over into the next season and was then to be used for common; thereafter, one hat apiece each year kept up the perennial supply.

The preparation of material was pleasant work but required careful attention. After the grain-stalks were gathered it was necessary to sort, joint, strip and loosely tie them into bundles which were placed on a smooth surface to prevent bending or breaking the straws. Storing for future use was impracticable as the mice destroyed it as soon as placed.

If the demand for platting material exceeded the supply some of the "louse-cages" were finished only with eye-shades, visors or bills, and others without rim adornment.

Young women were really sincere when they sought to excel in the preparation of household articles. Their teaching was that such excellence brought its reward in desirable matrimonial favor and the final fulfillment of woman's mission in life.

Cheese Making.

Juice from the gooseweed or bedstraw plant served us in curdling the milk for cheese making when the regular agent, calf's rennet, was not to be had. This rarely happened, however.

When a calf or lamb was killed it was as necessary to cleanse, dry and save the stomach as to prepare any other part of the animal for food. Since but a small piece of

the leathery substance was necessary for our cheese manufacture one rennet lasted a long time. Sometimes we borrowed a rennet "settin' "—say an inch or two square—from a neighbor. The rennet of a sucking pig sometimes was used for the curdling process. Many plant seeds possessed the quality of milk curdling but their use was not necessary.

Our cheese product would not pass muster in appearance or quality with some of the finely finished discs of today. There was a wide range of size, shape, color and consistency, according to the season, the receptacles, and the scald of the batch of curds. Mouldy cheese was the rule instead of the exception, and many persons who considered themselves expert judges declared cheese was not palatable unless it was infested with skippers.

The night's and morning's milk were used together, and scalds were made in the large iron kettles. The pressing out and curing was a tedious process, and the discs were stored on slab shelves in the smokehouse. Cheese at our home did not spoil with age. More often it was eaten too green than too ripe and the supply did not begin to approximate the demand.

CHAPTER XIV.

Home Manufacture of Necessary Articles.

Our first brooms were of the hazel-switch make. A bunch of the young flexible switches was tied evenly around a smooth sapling handle. These sweepers did very good work on dirt floor cabins. Later we made brooms in this way:

A freshly cut, round, hickory stick about five feet long and four inches in diameter was selected. Beginning at one end, a uniform row of shavings about a foot backward was made encircling the stick. The ribbon-shavings were tied back to the handle-end to permit work on the next row. The process was continued until the stick diminished to an inch indiameter. The remnant of stick then was cut off close to where the shaving work terminated.

The shaved strips then were untied, turned downward, loosely fastened, and the shaving process was begun eighteen inches above the point where the other cutting ended. A row of ribbons encircling the stick was made and tied down over the first bunch. Another and another row followed and all were turned downward and securely fastened with buckskin thongs.

The remaining long end of the stick was dressed down to the size for a handle. These brooms lasted for two or three months. The ox-yoke makers always manufactured the hickory-ribbon brooms as skill was required to prevent cutting off the shavings with the keen edged tools.

When raising broom-corn, and it was yet in the field, about eighteen inches to two feet at the top of each stalk was broken over so the heavy seed-head cured well and kept the broom-fibre even and straight. When ready for use the heads were pulled over a board through several sets of teeth to remove the seeds, and the fibres then were shaped into round bunches on the handle.

Bullet Moulding.

One of the staple commodities which always was brought from the supply stations, Dubuque, Des Moines and Iowa City, and deemed quite as important as breadstuffs was the pig lead from which bullets were moulded. This work was an every evening arrangement for the menfolk.

The lead was cut into small pieces and placed in the hand-made, steel fire-shovel which rested on a bed of glowing coals. When the lead melted it was poured into the bullet-molds. Only one leaden sphere could be molded at a time and the iron jaws of the molds were opened to release each bullet as it cooled.

Father always used the first "run" of lead which was without foreign substances, and he "necked" his own supply. Special care was necessary in trimming the surplus lead which adhered to the bullet in the lips of the molds. Defective molding or uneven trimming meant possible loss of game and a waste of ammunition.

The working surface for bullet-molding was a good-sized, clean, smooth stone. Overflow from pouring the melted lead and the bullet trimmings could be recovered from the stone with the minimum of dirt or refuse that would have been gathered if the work had been done on the hearth-surface.

The curiosity of children never was satisfied until they had burned their fingers handling the shining, silvery-looking balls before they were cool.

Greasing bullet-patchin' also received careful attention. The corners were rounded from the inch square-cut factory and held between the thumb and forefinger. The fingers of the opposite hand were rubbed very lightly over a hunk of mutton or venison tallow and the grease worked carefully into the patchin'. These discs were strung on threads ready for use. Ramming a bullet was made easier with the prepared patches, and swabbing the gun-barrel was not so often necessary.

Basket Making.

A pleasant evening occupation for the family was basket making. The method was about the same as that used today for homemade work. Small children made play-baskets until they could produce a salable article. Baskets for stable and yard use frequently were made from the bark of a young basswood or strips of slippery elm.

A chunk of ashwood several feet long for the splint baskets was pounded with a small mallet until the growth-sections separated into smooth ribbon-strips. These strips were woven into different size and shaped baskets which sold from two to six bits apiece. Measuring skepes also were made.

The splint chair-bottoms were made from these ash-ribbons. Rough rustic frames were constructed and the strips interlaced upon back and bottom. The chairs were comfortable and durable. Stools without backs were very serviceable.

The material for willow-baskets was cut in the spring as soon as sap began to rise, say, maple-sugar season; and the pliable, slender sticks were peeled for the purpose. If the whips became dry and the bark "set," they were immersed in the creek or rolled in a blanket which was kept saturated with warm water until the green jackets were loosened.

Willow whistles of many sizes and varied degrees of sound-shrillness were made by shaping the mouthpiece and making a notch in the upper surface. The bark surface then was pounded carefully until it could be removed intact from the stick. A bit of the wood was trimmed from the notch to the mouthpiece, the bark replaced and the noise maker was finished.

Willow baskets were stronger and heavier receptacles than those made from ash-strips but did not command so high a price. The red-bark kinnikinic, a marsh-land willow, occasionally was used for small baskets. Smokers often supplied their pipes with the dried kinic bark or

leaves. It was said to possess the tonic properties of quinine, but our men folk did not smoke.

Side baskets for light carrying were made to be strapped across a horse's back and depend from either side. A baby could be carried in one of these baskets on a visiting trip on horseback. The fireplace basket was for the newly born baby, and with its contents was disposed in a slanting position where the heat was moderate.

A "hulk" of a "youngun" was sentenced to sit beside the baby basket to see that the popping, flying sparks did not fall on the inflammable swaddling clothes. Whatever may be said of pioneer children they at least knew enough to keep out of the fire. They did not, however, always come in when it rained.

Ox Yokes.

My brothers were quite dextrous in shaping and finishing hickory ax-handles, plough-beams and ox-yokes for local demand and for sale in Des Moines.

The hard-maple cuts for yokes were chosen, roughly blocked with an ax, and placed on the overhead cabin-beams to season. The nicety of shaping and finishing was done with the draw-shave and bowie-knives.

The bows to encircle the animals' necks from the top downward, were fashioned from hickory saplings. While green and pliable they were bent into U-shape, tied securely and left to dry and set. The hard maple yoke was fitted to the necks of the oxen and four holes were burned through the wood with a red-hot iron at points which would be close to the beasts' necks. The ends of the hickory bows were inserted in the holes and fastened on the upper surface of the yoke with a wooden key—a peg put through a small hole in the bow.

An iron bolt through the center of the yoke with a ring on the under surface furnished an attaching place for the end of the wagon or cart tongue. A log chain also was fastened at the center-bolt and extended backward and was

knotted about the wagon-hounds. No pioneer teamster ever began operations without providing himself with one or more log chains.

No leather harness for oxen was necessary. The direction of travel was indicated by the driver who walked on the left side and shouted "gee" or "haw." The speed was regulated by cracking the whip or by the use of an immense ox-goad. Many teamsters became very accurate in the use of the long-lashed whip with buckskin cracker. The thin whip-lash would writhe and hiss smartly through the air when disciplining a refractory ox, and at the proper yank would pop like a pistol either at the "off" ear of the leader, the "nigh" flank of the wheel-ox, or at any other part of the animal's anatomy which the driver desired to strike. John Lyon excelled as a whip cracker. His gad lash warned of his approach.

Two to five yokes of oxen were worked together. A number of our pioneer prairie-breakers used teams of bulls. Consideration for training a team of steers to the yoke-wise habit was their services for the season free to the breaker.

Yoke Turners.

The yoke-turning team of oxen was an exasperating pair. When the old-fashioned twenty-two inch breaking plow was turning under the hazel brush and shearing off the saplings, the plow-point often would strike a resistable root or stone; this was the yoke-turners' signal. Simultaneously the critters put noses together, ducked their heads to the ground, and at the same instant threw their bodies apart. This performance completely reversed the neck-piece and caused more or less delay. The ox-driver considered himself very fortunate if no appliances were broken and no runaways resulted from the yoke-turning episode.

Two of our ox-teams—Buck and Bright and Nig and Toddy—were greatly prized by the family. The latter

yoke, some years later, became the property of Walt Wilson and served well in the work of development for our city.

In this day of fleet horses, fast automobiles and flying machines the spectacle of a pair of oxen running away would be unique but this was a frequent diversion for us. Buck and Bright, as well as Brindle and Spot, indulged their speeding inclinations at every opportunity. There were, however, no dangerous barbed-wire fences, no lawns to trample and no timid women to frighten; so the frisky bovines were permitted to make their hasty run and return at leisure which they usually did in the evening.

Occasionally trace or tongue-chains became entangled in fences or brush obstructions and the critters were held until released by a searching party. Our oxen, as well as our cows, were accustomed to answer our calls and we had little difficulty in locating them at any time if they were within hearing distance. It was not unusual for any critter in distress to indicate the fact by continuous bawling until relief arrived.

Ulis Briggs and Charles Biernatzki, farmer neighbors south of town some years later, owned teams of runaway oxen, but so far as I know, no one ever was hurt as a result of their unusual activities.

Sled-Bents.

Sled-bents from which runners were fashioned were found during our first winter on the Boone. These bents were good-sized saplings which had grown with the regular sled-runner curve resembling the letter "J." If two bents could not be found exactly alike, a large one was split into two pieces and the edges dressed smooth. The length could be six, eight or ten feet as desired. Upright hickory-pin supports at the rear and center of the runners, the same height as the curved front ends, were fastened to the pole side-frames. When cross-stays, slab-bed and side-stakes were put in place we had a very useful and durable sled.

Jack Brewer found a freak sled-bent soon after our arrival. Six feet from the gradual curve necessary for the nose of the runner, the sapling had grown at right angles. The two curves formed strong, solid, natural supports after the bent had been split carefully.

Plow beams, likewise, were fashioned from a stick of wood with the natural, necessary curve. All wagon tongues were home-made for more than a generation, although tongues were not always used in the early work with ox teams. Binding poles and reaches were long, slender, smooth, pealed saplings. Emergency cart wheels often were cross-cut sections from large tree trunks.

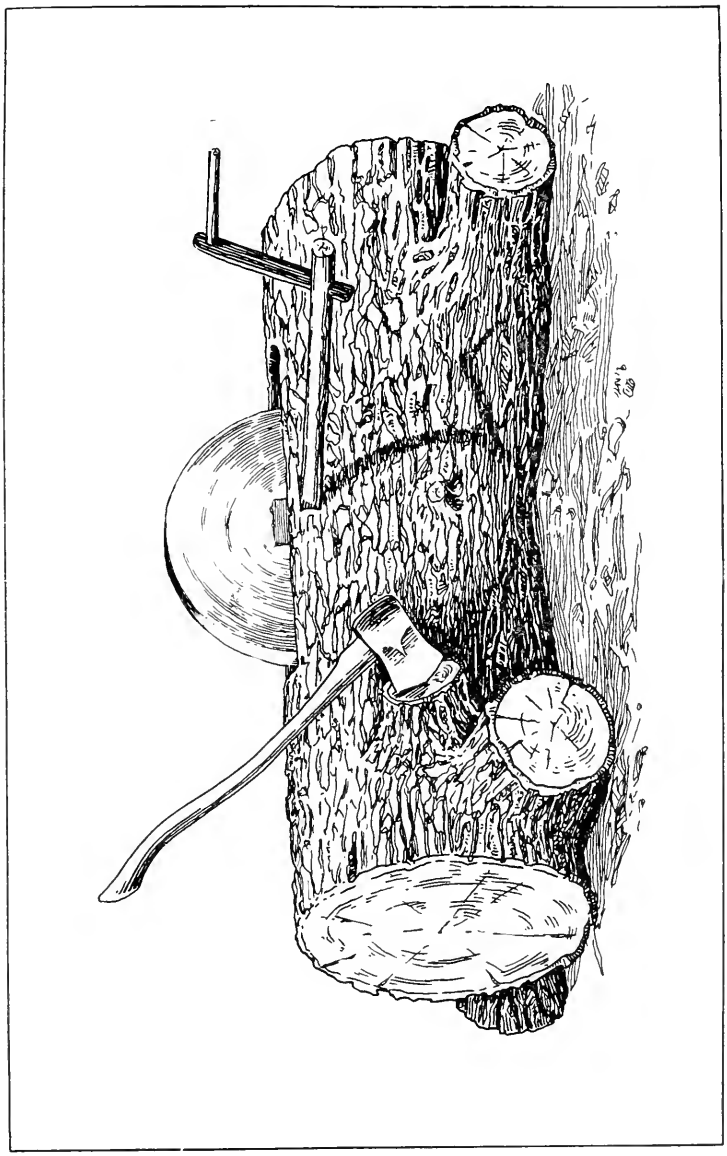
Maul heads were made from the large, gnarly, twisted protuberances which frequently were found growing from trunks of trees. The larger the knot the better the maul. The tree was cut and the knotty section hewn out and shaped. No steel edge-rings were needed to prevent splitting or flattening. The material was almost as hard as iron and outlasted a dozen straight-grained mallets. Rube Bennett was an expert at maul making.

The Old Grindstone.

It was immediately necessary after locating to "gear up" the grindstone for the daily care of axes, grub-hoes, scythes and other tools.

A temporary device was the sawbuck frame but it was too wobbly for good work and too low for ease in turning. We then set a crotched post in the ground near a tree which had a limb at the same height. The grooves were made as smooth as possible, the free end of the shaft was laid in the tree-crotch, and the handle-end placed in the post-crotch. Cleats were fastened above the shaft on the supports and wooden pins kept the machinery in place.

Later we prepared a permanent and absolutely solid grindstone frame. The six-foot section of a very large log was dragged into the dooryard and stripped of its bark. On the upper surface about two feet from one end, an out-



THE OLD GRINDSTONE.

line six or more inches wide and, say, two feet long was made. The material inside the outline was adzed, chipped or burned out as in canoe work, until there was formed a half-circle groove toward the heart of the log, which had a depth of more than half the diameter of the disc and wide enough to permit the easy movement of the grindstone when hung therein.

Two auger holes, one on either side, were bored at right angles from the center of the groove for the grindstone shaft. With the disc evenly poised on its support, the lost motion reduced at the crank, the bearings soaped and the groove under the stone supplied with water we had an excellent sharpening machine; and no doubt any grindstone turner will aver that the man who sat a-straddle of the log and held the implement was the one who put the "aige" on it.

It was many years before the belt and treadle appliances came into use, by which time the insistent need for them was greatly reduced.

Footwear.

Father made the shoes worn by the older members of the family for several seasons. The exchange of untanned deer or elkskins for the tanned cowhides which he used in his heavier work was made in Des Moines. We were required to step flat-footed on a block of leather. This was folded upward on both sides of the ankle and roughly shaped to the foot. There was a seam in front and one behind sewed with waxed, tow thread. For cold weather an extra layer of leather was fastened to this moccasin-bottomed shoe for protection.

The moccasins and lighter foot-coverings for the smaller children were made by mother. The materials used were raw or home-tanned buckskins, or heavy jeans cloth. Often a mink skin, fur inside, as stretched for market was cut crosswise into two pieces, one piece for either foot. Short slits lengthwise were made for shoe-mouths.

The toes and heels were shaped and stitched on the outside, and buckskin thong-laces finished these warm winter shoes.

When boots came into common use the strenuous life of boys and young men began. Two sizes too small represented the average boot purchase. The struggle and distress of "getting on" the red-topped, copper-toed footwear in a family of four or five boys was painful in the extreme. They sat down and strained at the side-straps; if these pulled off, a hole—the size for inserting the middle finger—was cut in the boot-leg. They stood up and viciously kicked the foundation log or stamped frantically on the puncheon floor. Occasionally they gave it up and walked about with heel resting on the boot-counter. Sometimes pap or mam took pity on the poor sufferers and placed their bulk and strength behind the victim, reached forward, grasped the straps and staid: "Straighten your leg and push."

Well, if flesh could be puckered, pleated and pressed sufficiently the deed was done, and the acuteness of the pain of compression was matched only by the dread of undressing the feet.

Our family was the possessor of a brace of bootjacks. One short-shanked forked stick fastened to the foundation-log and one long-shanked fork. The boot-heel was placed in the jack on the wall and the other jack held in the hands and pressed against the boot-toe. After vigorous effort the vise released its grip. The boot was off; and as the blood finally flowed into the benumbed extremities there was a mournful period of "wailing and gnashing of teeth," and the boys were glad to slip their aching feet into hand-made, fur-lined house-slippers which had been fashioned at one sitting.

Two muskrat skins for this purpose were slit half way down the belly toward the nose. The feet were thrust inside; the extra length folded against the back of the heel and a rawhide or buckskin thong was tied around the ankle.

The disposition to remove boots seemed to afflict all the boys at once. Only one at a time could use the mechanical appliance so the "human bootjack" was pressed into serv-

ice. One boy stood behind the other with hands against the shoulders of the one in front. The foot of the rear lad was thrust between the legs and grasped in the hands of the boy ahead of him, and the pulling, hauling and hipity-hopping about the house ought to have developed the acrobatic proclivities of the youngsters. If the two performers were unable to accomplish their task a third party grasped the rear boy around the waist and their combined strength finally liberated the prisoner.

These exhibitions by the boys often were duplicated by the more dignified grown-ups. Foot-pinching, however, was not monopolized by the male members of the family. I remember that during my own wedding ceremony my feet were so excruciatingly painful I think I neglected to give an affirmative to the query embodied in the love, honor and obey clause.

A neighbor tells the story that his Sunday-go-to-meetin' boots were so tight he scarcely could get them on, and to remove them was an evening's job. He was making the regular weekly visit at the home of his intended wife. A heavy rain came up, and he was compelled to remain over night. Not wishing to "show off" in the presence of the family and the girl of his choice by attempting the difficult task of boot-pulling, he climbed the ladder to the loft where he was to sleep. He sat down on the bunk and nursed his aching feet. Realizing it would be imprudent to stumble about on the loosely lain attic floor-boards trying to separate his feet from the boots, he stoically and heroically decided he must sleep with them on; so he loosened his trousers' band, turning the legs wrong side out, down over his boots, and the bedding therefore was not soiled with boot-grease.

Another neighbor declares that when young he made a long journey a-foot, to visit his best girl. He pulled his boots at the regular family boot-pulling contest, in the evening. The next day he walked home barefooted, as he could not compress his swollen feet into the "cow-hides." His next visit was made in an ox-cart.

CHAPTER XV.

Unusual Weather Conditions.

The storms of early years were frequent and severe, but pioneers seemed to expect intense severity from nature and they were not disappointed. It was necessary to travel, perform work and procure food and they stoically accepted the situation.

Illinois Reports.

I have no fantastic stories to relate which will match the one recorded of the early '40's, in the "Annuals of Illinois." It is reported that the drop in temperature was so sudden that the water-fowl were frozen in the streams. Illinois also leads us in hail storms. A pioneer writer records that in the '50's, during the latter part of June, a hail storm occurred which covered the ground to the depth of a foot, the drifts of which persisted until after the Fourth of July. There are, however, many persons now living (1921) who remember the terrific winter of '56 and '57, when the blizzards swept northwestern Iowa from late October until the return of spring loosened their gelid grip and poured forth the disastrous floods of May.

Locations.

The shrieking winds and snowy wastes of winter were deemed far more dangerous than the elemental strife of summer or the floods of milder weather. The pioneer's life often depended upon the accuracy of location and resourcefulness in caring for himself. Caution was necessary at all times. The sun and stars were dependable guides. When these were obscured camps were located and hunting parties stationed sentinels to keep clear the north and south

direction, or some natural object at camp was marked as an indicator.

Wet and Inclement Periods.

An occasional good or bad "spell o' weather"—usually bad—brings out the old settlers' stories of severe storms and inclement weather in the "airly" days.

I remember that in addition to the mild winter of 1848 and 1849, the spring weather was balmy and delightful. Father and Bob Palmer made a trip to Des Moines in the month of March, the year following our arival. They covered a part of the distance barefooted and minus their coats.

No early spring freshet accompanied the going out of the ice. There had been very little snow and the light rains had settled into the soil. Father was jubilant over the weather and crop prospects and declared he had made no mistake in locating on the Boone river, in Iowa; nor did the subsequent bad seasons' experiences cause him to regret the change from the East to the West.

The wet season of 1851 was not an encouraging one. Floods resulting from melting snows were augmented by copious rains at ice-passing time and from early May until late July the earth was inundated. The biblical downpour of forty days and nights was exceeded and extended to seventy days; although the hilltops were not covered with water, the lowlands certainly were.

No crops, except turnips, were raised. Sickness prevailed not only in our own family and neighborhood but in the settlements scattered about the country. The state exchequer subsided to the small balance of less than one dollar and fifty cents, and for many months our money-pouch was unfamiliar with coin.

Iowa was classed as a swamp-land state. For many years not a foot of drainage tile was placed. She now has thousands of tons of tile in position, hundreds of miles of private tile-drainage and immense dredge-ditches intersect

the state. With these methods of eliminating moisture the wet season of 1915 produced but half a crop of corn; so the predicament of the pioneers over sixty years ago may well be viewed as tragical.

The season of 1858 was a serious one for the settlers. I mention this year, not because it was so much worse than some others, but because more residents remember the conditions and because it marked an epoch in my life—marriage. The worst floods came after seeding-time. Farm lands were submerged, the seed which had been planted was sacrificed and no more could be obtained. The financial panic also was in active operation; but even this dreary outlook did not serve to deter a wedding ceremony in our family and Sarah Brewer became Mrs. Thomas Bonebright by the official authority of Judge J. D. Maxwell.

Various accounts of the crop of 1858 are related by the residents. Alfred Moore asserts that his crop of corn on forty acres was one wagon bed full of nubbins which sold for just enough money to buy the material for a pair of jeans trousers. His oats crop brought the same price and paid for the making of the britches.

The last story teller carries off the palm. Frank Mason discounted Moore by laughingly relating that he raised a crop of but three ears of corn, one large ear and two little nubbins. The rent was to be one-third of the crop so the landlord exacted the big ear of corn. The story, of course, was told to accentuate the thriftiness of the landowner whom everybody recognized.

Big Game Migration.

The terrific snows and intensity of the cold weather of 1852 and 1853 made travel almost impossible. The severe winds and storms from the northwest forced the big game southward. At frequent intervals during the winter great droves of elk and deer were seen making their way through the mountains of snow along the river east of town. Hunters did not molest them except when necessity compelled.

The difficulty of procuring other food, however, made our menu for many a day to list exclusively:

Breakfast—Fried or stewed venison.
Dinner—Stewed or fried venison.
Supper—Warmed-over or jerked venison.

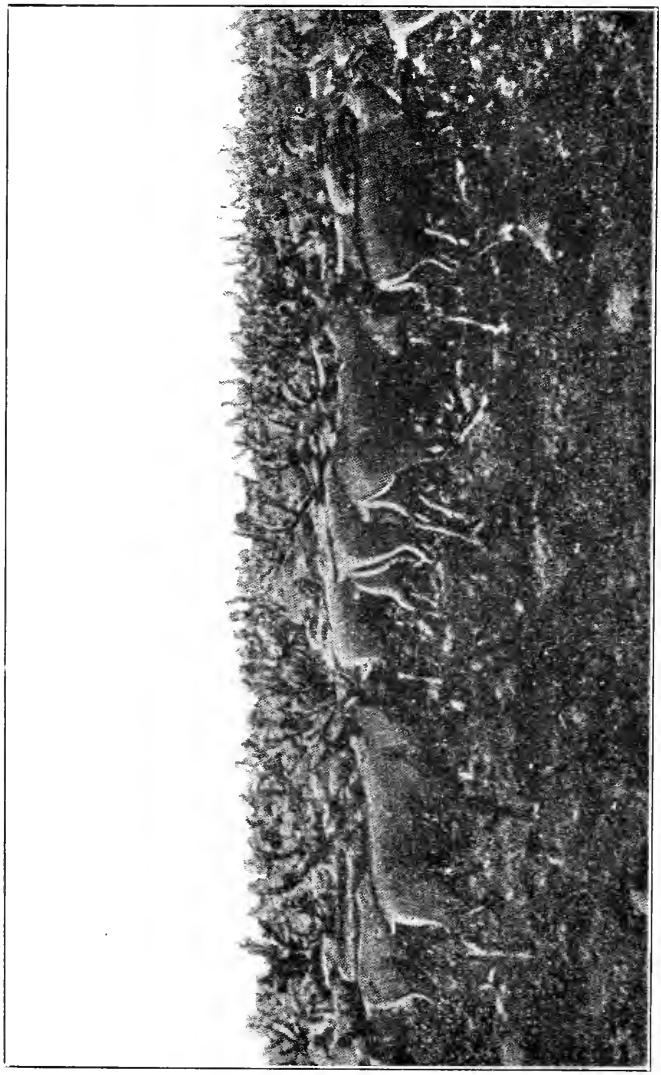
The migrating deer herds were followed by the wolf-packs. They killed and feasted upon the carcasses of the injured or exhausted animals that dropped behind the moving drove.

Hazel-brush, bramble-thickets and saplings along the path of the moving animals were browsed to the ground or to the snow's surface, and good sized trees were limbed and barked by the hungry, herbivorous beasts. Big game herds never were so numerous in this section after 1853, although there are various portly accounts of deer-killings subsequent to that time.

The winter closed down early and persisted until the icy floods of April. Snow covered the highest fences. To make an estimate of its depth would be to court membership in the Ananias club. A howling blizzard of a week's duration swept over our section, the severity of which far outclassed the one or two days' storms of recent years. The fall of snow at this time was not heavy but the wind blew a gale and found its way into every crevice.

We scarcely had recovered from this "cold-snap" when another siege was upon us. Snow, snow everywhere, and the supply seemed inexhaustible. For a solid week we were confined to the cabin; and it was necessary to use a guide-rope in making a trip to and from the stable. One end of a hempen-line was fastened to the doorsill and the other end held by my brother as he laboriously made his way to the stock-shelter. He secured the rope to the shed corner and the hand-over-hand method furnished safe guidance between the buildings.

The rigorous winter weather was forgotten, however, in the greater inconvenience and dangers of the spring breaking-up. Travel for any considerable distance was un-



LAST HERD OF DEER. SEEN IN 1853.

thinkable. Families were put on half rations and a system of grinding economy practiced for many weeks.

The season of the Spirit Lake trouble has been described by many historians. The weather was very severe and the roads almost impassable but the same condition was experienced many times during the early years. Storms were usually about the same, but such an incident as being pursued by Indians served to impress upon our minds the large surroundings and accentuate the small and local happenings.

The regular teamsters to Des Moines, Dubuque and Iowa City, one of whom, Tom Bonebright—the head of our family—experienced serious difficulties in making winter trips through the Iowa snow-fields. During the springtime the regular teaming work was abandoned on account of the unfordable streams and impassable condition of the roads. Mr. Bonebright was one of the volunteers who enlisted at the call for assistance at Spirit Lake. His name, with those of the other members of the relief expedition is inscribed on the memorial tablet in the Hamilton county court house.

It frequently happened that heavy snow storms caught cattle away from shelter and the critters perished in the cold. Uncle Peter Lyon, at one time, lost several of his young cattle in that way. They sought relief from the soft, clinging snow-blizzard at a protected spot in a bend of the White Fox creek. The change from mild to freezing weather blinded and stiffened the stock and they were unable to reach home. It would have meant almost certain loss of human life to have instituted search for them.

Our family lost numbers of sheep in blizzards but with windbreaks about the woods-pastures our cattle always pulled through, although no doubt, with difficulty. Literally, we "kept the pigs in the parlor" through the intensely cold spells of the early seasons. The young calves, lambs or pigs were brought into the house and warmed at the fireplace and the best conditioned of them put through the trap-

door into the truck-hole beneath the floor. Here they were comfortable on a bed of hay.

Wood-cutters and hunters suffered severely during storm sieges; but upon the success of their efforts in obtaining food and fuel depended the welfare of their families and themselves. The question may be asked: "Why were not supplies of game and wood provided early in the season?" The answer is easy. To have done so would have meant the neglect of all other work. One who never has chopped wood for a five-foot fireplace cannot realize its consuming capacity when high winds and cold weather prevailed. An enlarged dooryard would have been necessary had we sought to store a winter's supply of wood.

Home facilities for preserving and storing food were none too efficient. We prepared quantities of jerked and dried venison, but without a constant fresh supply the reserve would have lasted but a short time. Continuous and often strenuous activity on the part of hunters was required to furnish game for families of from eight to fourteen members. There was no corner grocery to supply a deficiency of cooking material and we could not borrow from neighbors who, for the time being, were quite as poverty stricken as we.

Near Freezing.

Hez. Van Dorn and Roll Brewer, accompanied by father, made a trip to Eagle creek for big game, and on the way had bagged several fine animals. The early part of the second day the temperature had been near the thawing point with a clinging snow falling. The weather changed suddenly and gave promise of such severity the party decided to return home.

They had not collected camp fuel on account of the mild weather so they knew with the usual storm siege they could not keep up a continuous fire. It meant freeze to death in camp, or perhaps, freeze to death on the return way. The three men decided to take a chance on the latter.

Traveling became very laborious after a few miles had been covered, and to add to the delay and discomfort the ice gave way as the hunters were crossing the creek. The team and wagon were dropped into the water more than three feet deep and the wagon hammer went to the bottom of the stream. The broken ice at length was cleared away and the team released. The hammer was recovered with the use of a hoe-shaped stick and the journey resumed.

The drop in temperature was rapid. The wet clothing of the hunters formed an icy armor about them. They became so stiffened with cold that no attempt was made to shoot game on the way home.

Two herds of elk passed them along the fringe of timber skirting the river but the animals were more intent on seeking protection from the storm than in trying to escape from the human enemy. At various points other droves had corraled in a sheltered bend or timbered curve. The bunches of from sixty to a hundred and fifty animals rounded themselves up into a compact mass, the whole body constantly moving about the circle but keeping within the contracted space for warmth and protection. From a short distance the horns of the large herds reminded one of a forest of small trees.

Frequent stops were made to loosen the frozen coating which formed over the noses and eyes of the team. The legs of the weary beasts were severely lacerated and bleeding from bréaking through the icy snow-crust. Roll made every step of the way on foot and drove the team. Hez. lost his strength along with his courage. He was sure his fate was to freeze to death so he was wrapped in the robes and quilts and kept as well sheltered in the wagon-box as possible. Father, in his effort to save Van Dorn was badly frozen on the breast, arms and legs.

The party, after great discomfort, reached the hill north of town where Aunt Nancy Stanley then lived. Pap had to be lifted from the wagon and carried into the house. The clothing had frozen to his flesh where the garments

pressed upon him, and his movements had torn the skin in many places.

The half-barrel tanning-vat was half-filled with water from the spring. Father was placed in the vat and cold water poured over his head and the upper portion of his body. As the frost gradually drew out a coating of ice formed over the frozen parts of his anatomy. The water-cure was continued until the icy coat melted, after which he was undressed carefully, given a "horn" of whisky and put to bed.

Father suffered some inconvenience from the experience but often asserted that his limbs—if not his life—were saved by the simple but severe treatment. Van Dorn escaped with a frozen nose and ear. Roll says this trip was the longest ten miles he ever traveled.

Death by Freezing.

Soon after the arrival of the Downings one of the family lost his life while hunting near the head waters of the Boone. My father and Bob Downing, in a liesurely trip, had followed the river northward into Hancock county. They pitched their tents, trailed game through the day and returned to camp at nightfall. The weather had been squally—cloudy, spitting snow, clearing and clouding again. Toward sunset, while they were some miles from camp, the sky became lightly overcast and the directions were confused by Downing. Father said:

"Bob, it would be a mighty good evening for tracking, but I'm tired; maybe we'd better turn around and pull into camp."

"Turn around!" laughed Bob. "Well, we're headed straight for camp now. The treats are on you, Wils, for you're on the wrong trail."

"Not much," replied father; "I never was lost before, and I'm not lost now. If you think our camp is in front of us, it's you who are lost; and I'll stake my life on my accuracy of location."

"All right," returned Bob, "I'm as sure of my location as you are of yours, so you can take your chance and I'll take mine, and we'll talk it over tomorrow."

They jokingly parted company. My father, retracing his steps, reached camp in safety but Downing did not return.

Unfortunately a "skift" of snow fell during the night effectually obliterating the footprints of the wandering hunter, and although father persevered in the lonely search for several days the snow-mantled prairies and the immensity of space to be covered precluded the possibility of finding his comrade and the search was reluctantly abandoned.

We hoped for many weeks, for a report that Downing had located a hunter's camp or had been picked up by a band of Indians, but the report did not come. A few seasons later some human bones, a number of brass buttons, powder-flask, bullet-bottle and a gun with weather-worn stock were found beneath a lone tree on the bank of the Boone. The conviction that Downing had been frozen to death was confirmed.

Death by Freezing.

Peter Lyon, Major Brassfield, Jim Jenkins and Wils' Brewer formed a party for a holiday hunt in 1852. A storm compelled them to go into camp on White Fox creek a few miles north of town. Hoping that the blizzard soon would pass the hunters did not try to return home. The day had yielded little in the way of game supply. The weather was not yet severe, so Jenkins shouldered his musket and said he would circle through the woods and bag some birds for breakfast. The men in camp, meanwhile, busied themselves collecting firewood and placing poles and brush against the creek's bank for protection.

The storm soon began in earnest and a three days' siege was on. At nightfall Jenkins had not returned and the howling blasts of the blizzard sweeping about their shel-

ter accentuated the heart-chilling anxiety of his waiting comrades who were powerless to lend him aid. They quieted their fears somewhat with the thought that he might have found shelter in some natural nook or followed the creek and river trail back to his home.

As soon as the storm abated the three men broke camp. Ascertaining that Jenkins had not reached home a searching party was organized. More than a foot of snow had fallen, and in the bottoms had drifted much deeper. This fact made the outcome of the search seem obvious before it was begun.

The blanket of white remained on the ground throughout the winter. The following spring a partly dismembered human skelteton, the sundered musket-stock and barrel and the bones of a wolf were found about a mile from where the men had camped. Jenkins must have been bewildered by the storm and benumbed with cold when he was attacked and devoured by wolves.

Blizzard.

A hunting and trapping party composed of Jack Frakes, George Wilcox, Hez Van Dorn and Roll Brewer traversed Hamilton, Humboldt, Palo Alto and Emmet counties in '56, seeking the rapidly disappearing game. The boys left home soon after election and planned to return before Christmas. I mention this late expedition because it was the season of my father's death.

They had met with scant success and decided to strike for Big Island grove in Emmet county. The snow was heavy on the ground and the early part of the trip had been stormy. The farther north they went the deeper became the snow. The last week of the up trip the weather was fine, but traveling was tedious and provisions had dwindled to one ration daily.

They reached the lake and found ideal conditions for trapping. Shelter was prepared and two of the party—Roll and George—were to take the trail for the Irish settle-

ment, about a day's travel to the southeast, for supplies. Being familiar with the uncertainty of Iowa weather it was agreed that if a storm arose within twenty-four hours the two men in camp must look out for themselves. The other two would not attempt to return. The boys set forth on the trip amid the glories of a winter's sunset. Scarcely had the stars appeared before the clouds obscured them and the air became a sheet of white torn into a million fragments by the piercing, screaming blizzard.

Marking the direction of the wind and assuming that it would hold its course long enough for them to reach their destination, they pressed on. Late at night fatigue and freezing weather forced them to stop. A hole was dug into the side of a huge snowdrift for shelter. Fearing a possible shift of the wind and consequent bewilderment Roll and George—in order to keep their bearings— set stakes and alternately beat a north and south sentry track throughout the night. At daybreak, accurately having reckoned their directions, they journeyed onward and late at night reached the friendly shelter.

Frakes and Van Dorn, at Big Island, grew uneasy and became quite anxious to make the acquaintance of the Hibernian pioneers. In the morning they packed their trapping equipment into the wagon-box to be left behind. Jack took the lead afoot. Hez mounted one horse and led the other. At intervals the guide and follower changed places. After severe suffering they reached the settlement several hours after the walkers had arrived.

The storm continued for five days and was one of the most terrific ever experienced in northern Iowa. The four hunters reached home a few days before father's death in December. George Wilcox, relating the experience, declared "It was luck instead of good sense that saved us."

Pioneer trappers preferred walking to riding. They could keep warmer, make better time—especially in deep snow—and the chances of becoming lost were lessened by traveling afoot. Many teamsters walked beside their horses after roads were well established.

The company outfit of traps, harness and furs which the boys had left at Big Island was not recovered until the following spring when Roll and Tom Bonebright made the trip to bring them home. They arrived at their destination early in the evening and were busily gathering wood for a camp-fire near the fringe of brush which skirted the lake. A large cow elk came slowly into the open and challenged their marksmanship. Tom fired and wounded but did not kill her. Taking the trail into the under brush they followed and found her dying at the hiding place of a recently dropped calf. The beautiful newly-born creature was not in the least afraid. He licked the hands of the men and followed them like a dog. They decided to take the little creature home with them, captive, but during the night he wandered out of sight and his trail could not be found. For the perpetuation of the species nature very wisely provides that until several weeks old a deer or elk gives off no scent which the olfactories of a dog can follow.

CHAPTER XVI.

Medicinal Preparations.

The willingness of neighbors to attend the advent of infants and to prescribe for the many cases of fever and "ager," whooping-cough and itch threatened to keep doctors' profits at a low ebb; but the M. D.'s doubtless were far-sighted and philosophical, as the settlers' solicitude for the suffering was matched by the industrious—if unintentional—methods of distributing diseases in general, and the itch in particular. No one escaped its sociability. Like the militant mother-in-law it made periodical invasions and was a most exacting, disagreeable and unwelcome guest. A guest that did not depart until personal housecleaning was accomplished.

A lotion prepared from the roots of skunk-cabbage was used for the itch, and generous doses of sulphur and molasses were administered to the victim who had "ketched" it. Later a salve containing red precipitate cleared the skin.

One of the recurring and painful juvenile afflictions was the ground-itch. We all went barefooted through the summer season and the cracks which opened on the under side of the toes often seemed to threaten the loss of pedal phalanges. As usual, the remedy was worse than the disease. A greased woolen string, just heavy enough to fill the raw, inflamed and bleeding crack, was tied around the toe and worn until nature came to our relief with healing.

Our powers of resistance and recuperation certainly were phenomenal. When we consider the concentrated daily diet of corn dodger with a dressing so greasy that the children of today would reject it before tasting; when we reflect that this starchy dodger often was immersed in a plateful of maple-syrup or cane-molasses; and for a

change, buckwheat biscuit prepared without soda and spread over with wild honey in the comb; when we contemplate these flirtations with the demon of indigestion, it is quite wonderful that children lived to maturity, or that elderly people grew aged.

Meat of some sort was the pioneer's long suit and was eaten three times a day, between meals and for midnight lunch at any gathering. Workmen and hunters carried in their pockets a hunk of dried meat to nibble if a meal were missed, or in lieu of tobacco; and the small "younguns" were pacified with a strip of jerked venison.

Remedies.

The old grannies have lost their place as doctors, for such remedies as skunk-oil and goose-grease, sulphur and sorghum, rhubarb and butternut pills, boneset and burdock bitters, sassafras and smartwood tea, slippery-elm salve and plaintain poultices finally have given place to the concoctions of chemistry.

Burdock bitters was a regular spring tonic which everybody took whether sick or well. Various roots, herbs and barks were stewed until the medicinal qualities were liberated. The liquid then was drained off and mixed with maple-syrup and whisky; if the medicine did not kill, it cured. This theory was identical with the method of the old-time physician who prepared Hi-pop-a-lor-um and Lo-pop-a-hi-rum. For the former the bark of the tree was peeled upward and for the latter it was peeled downward; the effect on the patient to be that of either an emetic or a physic.

Well, I at least, did not die from these inflictions; but I remember I once thought I was about to die from an overdose of good stuff. My mother was the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter and, in accordance with the prevailing tradition, had gained some local celebrity as a home-doctor. She had been preparing the season's supply of butternut pills. The bark had been peeled from the tree,

placed in a kettle, covered with water and allowed to simmer for a long time to extract its strength. This decoction then was strained, sweetened and boiled down to the consistency of cold molasses. In this case the contents had been poured out and the pot set aside. Quite as a child licks the churn, a brother and I licked this pot. The result can be imagined better than described. It is needless to say, however, we did not repeat the experiment.

The List's Range of "Simples."

The pharmacopea of the pioneer contained a long and complex list of alleged remedies or "simples" for the ill, the ailing, or the victims of accident or belligerency.

There were animal products such as skunk oil, bulls' gall and castorium; vegetables for the double use of food and physic; fruits for preserving or distilling; herbs for cooking or a condiment; weeds and seeds for poultices or teas, with fresh or dried shrub or tree roots and barks, and a part, or all of them, perhaps, combined and infused into bitters.

Bitters may or may not have been unpalatable. They usually were combined from pleasant, indifferent and disagreeable tasting ingredients, but the quantity of any might have been increased or diminished according to the taste of the person who presided at the mixing caldron.

The winter's supply of various herbs such as water-pepper, pennyroyal and velvet dock, were gathered at their most efficient season. They were dried, tied in bundles and hung about the cabin walls for future use. Barks and buds were best if cut and prepared from shrubs or trees when the sap was up.

Whisky was the base for all bitters and the vehicle for internal and external liquid application. It was, in fact, an all around remedial rejuvenator. Whisky was administered to the hour-old babe and to the octogenarian; it was taken as an eye-opener before breakfast and a victual settler after meals, an exhilarator between them, and as a

nightcap at bedtime. The liquor may have antidoted a poison or slowly poisoned the patient, and either "straight" or as the body of bitters, whisky served in sociability as it did in sickness.

The pioneers were not confined to one variety of medicinal plants for listed diseases, for instance: teas made from the roots or seeds of burdock, the roots or leaves of plantain, from leaves of smartweed, cucumber seeds or corn silks, stimulated the kidneys. All were diuretic in their action if the right quantity and strength was administered.

The heart was stimulated by wormwood, aniseed, foxglove or dog fennel. Among the many cathartics of greater or less drastic action were: rhubarb, burdock and slippery-elm. When it was necessary to vomit a patient, either the tea of mustard seed, bloodroot (redroot), Indian tobacco (lobelia), or pokeroot was liberally swallowed. Canada hemp (dog bane), or Indian sage (boneset), furnished the dope for a feverish patient, and if the children were afflicted with worms a liberal dose of salty water, or tea from pigweed seed or tansy was essential. Baked powdered egg shell or bone in sweetened water also was said to expel worms, and snakeroot or papoose root or tansy tea assisted menstruation. The former was a prime favorite with midwives, and was administered to hasten parturition. It was a stimulant as well as a laxative.

Pennyroyal.

Pennyroyal is as well known today as in pioneer times, although it is not so abundant in the wild state. Peppermint, spearmint, horsemint (horse-balm or stoneroot), and catmint still are widely used for infant, youth, adult and the aged. The aroma is pleasing and the stimulating properties mild. Headache and stomachache were palliated by the action of peppermint and whisky, and the house cats—Tommy and Tabby—enjoyed good health by eating the leaves and rolling in a bunch of catnip. The mints were said to stimulate or to quiet muscular spasms and allay in-

flammation. Bugle mint or water bugle was taken for coughs and as a tonic and astringent.

Peppermint tea, a few drops of whisky and some flakes of the white substance from chicken droppings mixed together were fed to a colicky, newly arrived infant, or to one whose skin carried a tinge of yellow. A large dose of the same mixture, with the addition of a pint of milk, served to drench a horse suffering with the colic.

Midwives seemed to be merciless with the defenseless, newly born mites of humanity. They sought to save the child from a future attack of fits by administering a few drops of blood from the navel string, mixed with the mother's milk drawn before the first nursing. The infant's urine, likewise, was declared to be a specific for ear or eye trouble if dropped therein.

Sassafras tea—the root bark—stewed in maple sap, furnished a spring-time beverage that was not so bad to take. It was supposed to thin the blood and retone the system after the heavy dieting of winter. A liberal draught was said to relieve a sick stomach, and application was supposed to restore sore eyes.

Indian Tobacco.

Indiana tobacco or lobelia was a common and constant remedy for children as it was used for colds or coughs, and proved to be a good emetic for cases of croup. The flowers, seeds and leaves were used in preparing the medicine in its various forms. Dried, powdered leaves were snuffed by asthmatics, or smoked as a narcotic by nervous patients.

Indian hemp was largely used in bad cases of whooping cough, for fever and ague, and for kidney stimulation. A preparation from the root acted as a cathartic, and in the right quantity was sedative—especially the oozed resin. The flowers possessed a soothing, almost narcotic property, when they were beaten into a pulp as a poultice. It also was an excellent spring tonic.

Indian poke was known by its many parts as: pokeberry, pokeroot and pokeweed. It also was known as garget weed, and was used for distemper or an affection of the throat or "swallow" of cattle, and for a cow's caked bag. The plant was known to be a violent poison, but nevertheless it was used for inflammation, and the dried, pulverized root was administered to the sick in doses to cause purging or puking by the patient. Pokepowder also was used on the cucumber, pumpkin and melon vines as a bug killer, although the need for such treatment was not so urgent as it is now. Poke berries were used in our dyeing work, as were the red berries of the sumacs. The root-bark tea of sumac was administered for kidney and bladder troubles.

Elderberries served in bitters, and the fresh flowers for sweating-tea. The dried flowers were steeped with maple syrup and formed the liquid body for other medicines. Poultices from the blossoms were said to relieve boils or burns.

Bitters were not so palatable if chokecherries and the bark from fresh growth of the tree was omitted from the mixture, but the cherry action being astringent, too liberal a supply defeated natural tissue action and made necessary the counteraction of laxatives. As an alterative, cherry bark had a wide range.

The Asafetida Tit.

The preparation of home remedies might have been unnecessary had we been diligent in following the instructions of the asafetida advocates. The "fetta" bag, or "asafetida tit" was credited with the property of warding off all diseases that were "ketchin'." Were it possible for a foul smell and taste to repel the attack of a morbific agent, I am frank to assert that the asafetida guard never could have been passed by the germ scouts of infection and contagion.

A pill of "fetta" the size of a large hazelnut was placed

in a square of factory. The corners of the cloth were brought together and a string tied about it in the shape of a tit. There was sufficient length of string to extend loosely around the neck of the wearer. The person seeking immunity was instructed to place the asafetida tit in the mouth at regular intervals, or whenever approaching a suspected district of disease. Children were directed to suck the "fetta" bag, as a pacifier, after retiring.

When the disease was "ketched," however, the milky gum or solution was administered in all cases of digestive disorders. It would induce expectoration or act upon the bowels; likewise, it was a nerve sedative and anti-spasmodic, while a change in quantity was a stimulant. Its medicinal possibilities rivaled those of whisky, but the dose was not so easy to take. When we acquired horses, and the beasts "caught" distemper, asafetida was smeared on the bits for their relief, besides being rubbed on the feed boxes and a trace of it sprinkled in the ration.

Mullein.

A crushed, softened preparation from the well known, immense leaved mullein or velvet dock was thought to relieve internal fever or irritation of the skin, and was a mild stimulant. The cured leaves were used as tobacco by the Indians and a few pioneers, as was kinnekinik, mentioned elsewhere. Colt's tail, called flea, or butter-root, was administered as leaf tea for hemorrhages. We were not troubled with fleas, so its use was not necessary as an insecticide.

The leaves, flowers or berries of henbane were narcotic in their action, and poisonous to poultry and people. We were discreetly cautious in handling this species of nightshade, although it was prescribed in many cases of colic, whooping cough, spasms or bed wetting.

Comfrey, called "comfort," was as its name implies, comfort for the wounds on which it was bound, and the root-tea gave comfort to the patient who was suffering with

a cough. Dill tea, or the chewed seeds, quieted a restless or nervous patient, and furnished the cook with seasoning material.

Elecampane, shortened to "eleck," not only relieved a troublesome stomach and lung fever by furnishing a mild tonic, but in addition it stimulated the infirm and senile, it was asserted. Red puccoon (bloodroot) also served on this line, as in its many others, as an alterative. The roots of skunk cabbage contained an active stimulating property, but in the narcotic quantity relieved muscular contraction in young and old, and was used to antidote snake venom.

Milkweed did not appear in its present profusion until cultivation had considerably advanced. It was thought to be poisonous, but was taken as a sweater or an emetic. The root-juice relieved lung troubles and seemed to assist in clearing the throat and in making breathing easier.

It is not to be supposed that pioneers were honing for trouble in addition to their material privations. They, however, gathered the honewort, a species of parsley which was esteemed as a remedy for swellings. Specifically honewort was listed to cure "hone," a swelling of the jaw or face.

Camomile Tea.

Camomile tea was a common and popular remedy. Sprains were almost a chronic condition among pioneers. As a lotion for application to a sprained member, it brought relief and quiet nerves. It was claimed that incipient swellings could be scattered, or the aching surface surrounding a "bile" reduced to normal by the aid of a camomile poultice. Copious draughts caused one to "throw up" and thereby relieved spasmodic coughing, and it also was tonic in action.

Liverwort, or liverleaf, a three-lobed plant of a greenish purple color, was thought to resemble the human liver, therefore its medicinal qualities pertaining to the liver. Liverwort was said to be a sure cure for "janders," and it

also was credited with the ability to cure dog bites. Jaundice and biliousness were treated with pieplant syrup, if the "sure cure" failed. Moreover, liverwort was given for liver rot or worms in sheep, and a poultice was applied to foot-rot. With the development of foot-rot in our flock the first victim was killed and the carcass burned. If others became infected they were isolated, and any member of the family who would care for and cure them claimed the sheep as a reward for his ministrations.

Saffron flowers always were dried during the summer as a forehanded measure, either for home or neighborhood consumption. Saffron tea assisted elimination by stimulating the flow of urine and perspiration. Likewise, it lesened the periodical, physical disturbances of women, as did dog fennel and tansy. It also was thought to cure jaundice and skin eruptions, and was given to infants with the icteric skin tint.

Boneset tea ought to have cured all the ills that man is heir to—or prevented them—if one were to judge by the constancy of its use. The climbing hempweed or Indian sage was bitter to the taste, and for that reason, I suppose, more efficacious in results. It was said to allay fevers, correct dyspeptic conditions, stimulate the kidneys, induce perspiration and to have a general tonic effect on the patient, and also was used as an emetic.

Gentian.

For many years bitterwort or gentian roots served our family as a source of revenue. They were sold in Des Moines or Dubuque to be shipped east. The property of restoring the vigor of youth, as claimed by gentian devotees, was made the butt of many homely jokes. Why should the goddess Aphrodite smile through gentian and not favor other plants? Anyway, we sold the substance that was most salable and took a chance on retaining virility by virtue of individual assurance. We, however, substituted as a tonic ingredient in our bitters, the spignet, or spikenard, a plant

resembling gentian in points and properties except that the latter was bitter and the former spicy and aromatic.

The additional properties claimed for spignet, as well as for valerian and wild sarsaparilla, its relatives, were stimulative and sudorific. It served as an application for open sores, and was administered to sick dogs. Maria Wiltsey would no sooner have omitted the supply of spignet from her periodical "makin's" of bitters than she would have left the flour from her "salt raisin'" bread. I have known her to "work the woods" for weeks to procure her supply. Time and fatigue were not taken into account when the search for certain unseasonable herbs was being made.

Poultices.

The variety of poultices was innumerable. Many of them were nameless if not unnamable, and the supply was inexhaustible. Covering bruises, "biles" or burns with a soft pad of bruised plantain or liveforever leaves or crushed comfrey root was expected to insure immediate relief. Hop poultices were applied for almost any ailment or accident. Fumes from the cooked hops were pleasantly sedative, if not narcotic in their effect. The hop pillow also contributed to the quiet comfort of a patient.

The "drawin'" poultice was not so pleasing, even to contemplate. A doughy mixture of crushed mustard seed and buckwheat flour as a counter irritant was warranted to produce a blister equal to the size of the poultice itself. This "smearum" also was entirely reliable in relieving the internal discomfort for which it was applied. Grease or cloth did not protect the poulticed surface, and when the sticky mass was removed from the victim's bare skin, portions of the cuticle usually were torn away, leaving a raw and burning space which was calculated to cause forgetfulness by the patient of his original affliction.

Bruised bull thistle, nettle or horseradish leaves also served as active counter irritants. Thistles and nettles were

difficult to gather, but their stings were relieved by poultices of sour dock leaves. When feet, legs or hands were nettle-stung we sought a nice, soft, sticky mudpuddle, and smeared the stung surface with mud. Softened clay was more effective, however, than mud. It stuck better and retained moisture longer. A coating of mud or a gob of chewed clay was applied to bee stings. Yes, we ate a little clay occasionally to satisfy our unnatural appetites, since at that time slate pencils and chalk were not available. An incantation, "Out nettle, in dock," hurried relief to the nettle stung patient.

Wormwood.

Wormwood-herb tea was taken as a tonic and as a heart stimulant, and was said to be a destroyer of all kinds of worms, either the stomach or intestinal parasites. This fact readily can be believed because of its bitterness and strength. Wormseed was the fruit of any of the goosefoot or pigweed family. There was no resemblance or relationship between the wormwood and wormseed plants. The similarity was in the power to expel worms. It was claimed for wormseed, however, that it was a vermifuge for round worms only. Cheeseweed or mallow was of a sticky consistency when the leaves and buds were crushed, and it formed a soothing poultice for an inflamed surface. Cheeseweed received the name because of the seeds' resemblance to cheese. A thick syrup from the roots was used as a body or vehicle in mixing other medicines.

Sweet William tea was a popular remedy with pioneers. Either the vari-colored prairie or the light blue woods variety was used. They grew in such profusion that daily bouquets were gathered in their season, and the bunches then were dried for medicinal purposes. The tea was taken for rheumatism and a liniment from the plant leaves relieved the aching joints. Watermelon and pumpkin seed tea stimulated the kidneys. The ashes from hickory or hard maple wood mixed with water was said to thin the

blood, while the water from boiled willow, poplar or prickly ash bark acted as a tonic.

Munching Material.

Children almost continuously were munching some of the dried buds, berries, barks or roots of edible plants in their season. Basswood buds were good eatin', and the inner bark of the slippery elm, when the sap was right, could be bitten and chewed like cheese. The spring hickory sprouts were pulled from the ground, the dirt freed from the tap root, which was about the solidity of a cabbage-stalk heart, and they were eaten with great relish. When we sat about the campfire or fireplace the sweet, simmering sap from the ends of burning logs was collected on the fingers and licked off.

Dried pieplant or dried grapes furnished an acid tartness very different from the foregoing. Dried sweet flag root, held in the mouth, was said to sweeten the breath. The supply of calamus was abundant and really would have been a beneficent contribution to the list if it also could have neutralized a disagreeable foot odor. Medicinally flagroot was prescribed as a stimulant, a nerve tonic and to settle a sick stomach. The stomachs of children, however, had little need for assistance since we seemed to persist in the choice of unripe, instead of ripe fruits, for consumption.

Had mouth, throat, skin or stomach diseases been contagious the whole family or neighborhood would have "ketched" them because of the careless and promiscuous use of household appliances, table utensils and toilet articles.

Edible Herbs.

It is possible the families of pioneers might have gone hungry occasionally, and it is certain they would have been sick oftener, but for the quantities of pot herbs consumed as greens, in addition to the raw fruits and roots already mentioned.

Artichokes sometimes were cooked or eaten raw by our family, but they furnished a finer field for foraging hogs. Wild leeks and onions provided a strong food for man and beast, but when in addition they were taken second hand from the breath of another or from the milk of the leek-eating cows the double dose was sickening. Notwithstanding the strong smell of the leaves and bulb, the wild onion bore a beautiful, pink, sweet-smelling blossom.

Fresh sheepsorrel and the mints were sought throughout their seasons and the supply of mustard, lamb's quarters, sour dock, horseradish, kale and purslane for greens, kept the pot bubbling most of the summer. Purslane, however, did not appear in its present abundance until cultivation had progressed for several seasons. I believe the dandelion was not a native in these parts, but was introduced by a local physician as a medicinal herb or spring tonic.

Salads were made from the leaves of many of the plants already named, and they were excellent, not to say delicious, when combined with wild peppergrass, or tame pepperpods, Indian cress, fresh wild cucumber pods and nettles or thistles. Of course, the regular salad material such as cabbage, cucumbers and tomatoes were supplied from the garden.

Relishes and seasonings for the table were prepared from plants, roots or seeds. Grated horseradish roots or crushed mustard seeds and vinegar made palatable the lean venison or fat pork or served instead of butter on the johnnycake. Pepperworts, red pepper pods or the dried crushed seeds gave warmth to a mixture. Capsicum, moreover, became a medicinal agent as a gargle, and for neuralgia, rheumatism, fever and ague and dyspepsia. It also was administered when one had taken too much fire-water.

Coriander seed, in addition to settling a sour stomach or relieving water brash, was used quite extensively in baking, when cook stoves were used. Caraway seed served in the cooking and as a carminative. Dill seasoned the pickles and quieted the nerves. Sage leaves were placed inside the spitted fowl, and when made into tea, acted as a tonic, in-

duced perspiration and reduced the flow of sick water from the mouth—or stomach. Sage poultices were applied to an open sore, to a sore throat or to a caked breast and to relieve the flow of milk.

Dried leaves of the wild ginger plant (colt's-foot), spiced the pumpkin butter when the boughten supply ran short. If one ate too much pumpkin pie, and colic or dyspepsia ensued, a strong dose of ginger tea was taken. Sorrelworts, or the many varieties of docks were freely prepared medicinally, in addition to their use for internal gratification and external application, as already recorded.

Charcoal.

Charcoal was considered to be an excellent remedy as a preventive—that is, if one had a sour stomach, charcoal might absorb the gas and prevent indigestion, or it might neutralize the acids of indigestion, and prevent the final accumulation of poison in the system. At the first complaint or sign of illness, therefore, a few coals from wood slowly burned with little air, were dropped into a cup of water, and the liquid was drunk by the ailing victim. Powdered charcoal was given to sick dogs if their own method of eating grass did not vomit and relieve them. Charcoal as a tooth powder was a success, and a piece of the black substance held in the mouth was said to sweeten the breath. A charcoal poultice laid on a foul-smelling sore, neutralized the offensive odor although the appearance of the affected surface was not improved.

When the absorbent and deodorizing agencies of charcoal were inadequate and when ventilation by way of doors and fireplace did not suffice to neutralize house smells, the smudge-pot was brought into requisition. A handful of coffee, maple sugar or sulphur, whichever was most plentiful, was thrown upon the coals and another portion upon the heated fire-shovel, and this smoking was our method of fumigation. The smell of burning hair or feathers, also, was pretty effective in driving out smells, not to mention driving the family out of doors.

CHAPTER XVII.

Charms, Signs, Other Remedies and Methods.

The "airly day" lists of cures were littered with fantastic, not to say grotesque charms, signs and superstitions, one of the survivals of which is the white, left, hind rabbit foot of a bunny caught at midnight, in the light of the moon, on Friday the thirteenth, beside the grave of a friend, which talisman still is thought by a few persons, to preserve health and fend all ill luck, if a magic rigmarole be trustingly repeated by the holder or owner after receiving the instructions from one of the opposite sex.

The thirteen at table superstition was less vital with us than it is today. The average number in a pioneer family ranged dangerously near to thirteen, and if company arrived that number was more frequently hit than missed. When company was to come we were warned by the old gander hissing or the rooster crowing at the cabin door. If these monitors failed us, however, we knew that if a knife or fork or the dishcloth were dropped while preparing a meal, our numbers for the next repast would be increased. When the dropped cloth left a wet spot on the floor, a slattern or a slink was expected—or both. An itching right palm insured the handshake of a friend, the left—money. A burning right ear indicated favorable discussion of one's characteristics, the left ear—scandal. Itching sole of the right foot, signified a sojourn on strange soil, the left—a visit near home.

There were incantations for casting the fire from a burned surface of the skin, and the same for drawing frost from frozen members. There were lingoes chanted for those going into danger; if the subject escaped harm it was the mark of favor, but if disaster overtook him the victim was blamed for unbelief. The howling dog was the herald

of ill luck, illness or death, and the appearance of a black cat confirmed the howling premonition. The persistent and aggressively toned barking of wolves was a bad luck sign, signifying a shortage in food supplies. The cooing of wild pigeons close to the premises was unfavorable for matrimonial candidates, or for a sick individual. The fear of walking under ladders did not disturb us, since our one ladder—a puncheon center-support with shake cross-pieces —was set vertically from the first floor to the loft. The projecting log-ends of cabin or stable were used as outside ladders while a pole against the trees occasionally served the small boys when the trunk's circumference outmeasured the reach of legs.

Trouble followed close upon the victim who brought a garden implement into the cabin, but the entailment could be abated if it were taken back out from the same door and not carried through. Disaster traipsed at the heels of the careless sportsman who toted his firearm directly through the house. He, however, could escape the consequences of such heedlessness by placing the gun for a moment on its "crotch-stick" hanger above the door. Ill luck awaited if, when a journey was begun, the traveler returned for a forgotten article. The gods could be propitiated, however, if he sat down and drunk nine swallows of water; nine drinks also while thinking of the person one loved best relieved the spasmodic action of hiccoughs.

Getting off on the right foot for any adventure was thought to be imperative to insure pleasure or profit. We could not observe the rule for getting out of bed on the right side, as the stationary beds had but one open side. We, however, did arrange for a north or south head for beds, the idea being that sleepers rested better than if the head were toward the east or west. The cradle of a sick child always was kept in line with the north and south poles, although we did not understand the reason for the rule. Ill luck superstitions carried a more direct appeal when illness prevailed and personal conduct was studied to prevent additional trouble from the careless observance of signs.

Signs.

Believing the first sight of the new moon over the right or left shoulder brought good or bad luck respectively, the initial glimpse of the silver sickle was sought over the right shoulder. Failing in that, the impending evil could be averted, partially at least, by facing directly to the front at every sight of the moon during the remaining days of its phase. If the moon were first seen through glass, bad luck would ensue unless coins or amulets were turned in the pocket. Moon signs and wind directions were taken into account as auspicious or otherwise when babies were born. If a child happened to come into the world on Friday, last quarter of the moon and wind in the east, the fates listed him for a cloudy career. On the other hand, if he arrived on Monday, first quarter of the moon and wind in the south, a sunny life was apportioned. The belief was general among pioneers that no new piece of work should begin on Friday.

Hunters' signs and superstitions were strong working rules and conscientiously believed. I have known hunters to postpone a long planned trip because of unfavorable luck signs or dreams that were interpreted as an unsuccessful hunt; notwithstanding, it was thought the postponement of any event presaged misfortune for the final venture, whether the event were a wood-chopping or a wedding.

A gun-wise sportsman cared for his weapon as he did for his more valuable possessions. He did not place it flat on the floor, he did not carry it directly through the house, he did not step over it, he did not blow into the muzzle, nor did he try out the sight and trigger action on members of the household, but he carefully cleaned, loaded and hung up the weapon as soon as he returned from using it. The one possession of a pioneer which he was not willing to lend was his gun. Razors, butcher-knives, bowie-knives or jack-knives made the round of the family or neighborhood, but guns were in a separate, special and superior class. Father declared that after his gun had been borrowed it took sev-

eral days to get "Jerushy" back to the point where he was sure of her work. Strange to say very few pioneer women made regular use of the gun, although nearly every one of them could wield the ax with precision and celerity.

Hunters observed the new moon for position and location. The latter indicated warm or cold weather relatively with the distance north or south in the heavens, and its position marked the month as wet or dry. If the crescent points were so nearly vertical that the thong of a powder-horn would not hang on the lower one, the rain was pouring out and hunting signs were auspicious. If the points were almost, or quite in a horizontal position the rain was being stored, and as dry weather ensued the powder-horn was hung up, for the time, and hunting postponed, for huntsmen were as positive of this working rule as woodsmen were sure that a season's heavy limb and leaf growth indicated a severe winter.

There were various weather rules which we considered quite reliable. A cold winter usually followed a hot summer, or if the latter was moderate the winter likewise was moderate. If, during the period of the vernal equinox, the general direction of wind was northwest, the summer would be cold and dry; a good season for small grain but bad for corn. If the wind at this time blew from the southeast. the weather would follow hot and wet; if from the southwest, hot and dry; or if from the northeast, cold and wet. We reckoned our first frost to be due six months from the time we heard thunder in the spring, or six weeks from the time the first song of the katydid was heard. When frost came in the dark of the moon, it was not nearly so injurious to vegetation as if the visitation were during the moon's early phase.

The call of Bobwhite was an indication of rain. Frogs croaking in the daytime gave promise of the same result. If the sunset was clear on Friday night we expected rain before Monday night, and if the deluge began before seven, it would stop before eleven. A fairly reliable rule was: if Easter Sunday were rainy, we looked for a measure of

precipitation on seven consecutive Sabbaths. The sun was drawing water, if alternating dark and light streaks were seen converging from the horizon to the late afternoon disc, and rain was due within twenty-four hours, unless the wind held a southwest course. We observed that storms coming against the wind were not liable to strike us unless the wind shifted to the angle from which the clouds approached; and if the sky cleared during the night unsettled weather would continue.

Amulets.

Had the pockets of the pioneers been pilfered there would have been found amulets of all kinds, colors and consistencies, from a button to a bull's tooth, from a horn-tip to a coon's tail; from a "tater" to a walnut, from turtle shells to toe-nails, as disease immunizers and lodestars for good luck. The rattles from a snake's tail, when sewed into the headwear of the credulous, seemed to exempt the wearer from headaches. The rattles, when carried by field workers, were thought to insure luck in killing other snakes. As playthings, they protected the children from creeping, crawling or climbing varmints. A red yarn neck or toe string for baby scared away the hobgoblins.

Animal's teeth, as amulets, were in high favor. Wolves' and squirrels' teeth were worn in clusters about the clothing, and in pendants or circlets. A wolf's tooth was said to insure courage for the chase, and a squirrel's tooth conferred power to divine the future, and to interpret sinister or serene circumstances. A knuckle from a pig's foot was carried to prevent rheumatism, and a small potato was "packed" for the same purpose, while craw-daddies' claws were valued as agents for relieving stomach-ache. A dead spider depending from a cord about one's neck was credited with the power of curing fever and "agre." Spider webs were highly esteemed as efficacious in arresting a flow of blood. Worn about the neck were many grotesque shaped pieces of buckskin or other material, upon which

might be written a word or sentence, or perhaps the drawing of a star, animal or serpent. These amulets were treasured carefully, and if lost—bad luck ensued. Dire misfortune was expected if amulets were given to one of the same sex. They could be disposed of without harmful results if thrown over the right shoulder into running water. Pebbles, almost as beautifully colored as jewels, were gathered and carried for pocket-pieces by pioneers, and served the children for marbles. The toad stone, resembling its namesake in shape, was worn on the belt or suspended from the neck to prevent the wearer from being poisoned. This inanimate object, however, was not so actively beneficial as the live toad, for he was bound upon a carbuncle to reduce the inflammation and to absorb the poisonous substances.

Blood Stone.

The blood stone, snake stone and mad stone were not worn as amulets, but served a similar purpose in their several lines. They respectively were listed for nosebleed, snakebite or dogbite. The blood stone was from two to four inches across, usually flat, or slightly concave on one surface. It was of a porous nature and was placed on the back of the patient's neck, and really was thought to be efficacious in checking nosebleed. A brass key, padded in the clothing over the heart, also was said to reduce epistaxis. Still another agent for relief from nasal hemorrhage was dried hog manure applied to the nostrils. Pressure on the upper lip, likewise, was said to secure satisfactory results to a patient with nosebleed. Lip-pressure was not in favor with children for sneezing or hiccoughing, for the louder and longer one could sneeze or "hickup" the better he liked it.

The substance of the snake and mad stones was similar to the blood stone, but they were of various shapes. When placed over the wound, it was asserted the snake venom or poison of rabies would be absorbed. Faith in these stones

did not warrant neglect in administering other remedial agencies. The wound either was sucked, or slit open and allowed to bleed freely, and a rattlesnake-plantain, snakeroot or sour dock poultice applied, while a bumper of snakeweed-tea or whisky was drunk by the patient. It also was stated that if a snakebitten member immediately were thrust inside a newly killed fowl while the animal heat still was retained in it, the venom would be drawn from the victim's blood. Leeches, likewise, did their best to lessen the distribution of poison through the patient's system, by reducing the blood supply. Perhaps the theory that: "Hair from the dog will cure the bite," was followed when the snake was stewed, and the bitten surface poulticed with beaten flax seed moistened with the water in which the reptile had been boiled. Following this principle, ear wax was a specific for cold sores if supplied by the patient whose lips were affected. Eye stones were found in the heads of crawfish. They were of smooth, white material the shape and size of a small, split pea. There was a depression on the flat surface somewhat larger than a pinhead. When there was a foreign substance in the eye, an eye stone was placed therein as an assistant in attracting or expelling the intruder. A couple of flaxseed under the eyelid was a really practical helper in collecting foreign matter which had found lodgment in the eye. If these assistants failed, the tongue of some member of the household was passed over the eyeball of the patient to dislodge the irritating material. A looped hair also was effective.

There seemed to be a general belief in the natural animal-heat remedies. In addition to extracting poison, it was alleged that the newly killed fowl, when slit open and placed upon the abdomen of the patient, would relieve colic; if applied to the feet, fevers were aborted; or to the head, headache was exorcised. The same line was followed in drawing a splinter or thorn from the flesh. A field mouse was caught, ripped open, and bound on the afflicted surface. A whitlow also was treated in the same way, and as felons were not uncommon, and the supply of mice was

inexhaustible, the application was not difficult to make. A split fish applied to soles of the feet was said to prevent or cure ague. The skin of a black cat, bound upon the chest—skin side down—was expected to relieve a lung-fever patient. Warm horse manure poultices were supplied for the sufferer with a stone-bruise or white swelling.

Sheep-nanny Tea.

The measles were treated effectively if unpleasantly for the sufferer. Unlike Samson of old, the strength of pioneers was not in the hair, but in the stomach. Recovery from dietetic indiscretions and medicinal inflictions proved the strength of the stomach, although it may have been "turned" many times by the unpleasant prospects.

One of the best known and most commonly used remedies, one that was specific in action and satisfactory in gaining results on the measles was: "Sheep-nanny tea." A cupful of sheep droppings was steeped in a quart of water, and the tea given to the patient to drink. If this did not start the rash and bring the measles to the surface, the case was considered to be hopeless. The same kind of tea was applied to swellings, and dropped into weak eyes to strengthen the vision.

Colds and catarrh were relieved by deer-foot tea. This tea was not so bad to take, and perhaps was as nutritious as reparatory. It should have been called soup instead of tea. Deer-foot knuckles were cleaned and a kettleful were simmered for a long time. The dark-colored liquor then was drained off and seasoned for use. Lamb's gall and honey was thought to insure against spasms, and the bone marrow relieved stiff joints. Liberal quantities of marrow taken internally, were believed to dissolve bladder stones. The oil extracted from the jaw-bone of a hog was applied to the neck for sore throat.

There were many kinds of poultices and oils applied to kibes, or chilblains, but in addition the frosted parts were dusted with the ashes of burned meat. Ashes from

the burned hoofs of a critter was said to kill lice if dusted into the hair, and beef's gall removed hair from the tanning hides, moreover it was credited with the property of curing earache, and was used with many poultice ingredients.

The supply of roots and herbs often ran short during the winter months. If one could not borrow from the neighbors, the freshly killed animal or fowl usually became immediately available, for instance: goose-gizzard tea could be ready for the patient within, perhaps, ten minutes. The fowl was killed, the gizzard removed and cleansed. The inner lining was scraped loose and stewed for tea to relieve dyspepsia and prevent vomiting. The raw material for this remedy always was at hand and almost as easy to prepare as the vegetable decoctions.

Nurses always were past middle age, frequently they were old "grannies." In the summertime, when it was decided a patient was sleeping too much, a cloth saturated with honey was placed near the face, and he was kept too busy fighting flies to permit the caresses of Morpheus. We, therefore, were not responsible for the development of "sleeping-sickness."

Fungus Growths.

The puffball, or devil's snuffbox, varied in size from six to ten inches across. When matured and broken open, the ball-shaped growth puffed forth its brown, dusty spores. When this fungus was bound about an open wound it was credited with the action of causing the blood to cease flowing. The fungus, smut or ergot which replaced the seed on cereal grasses was used to relieve congestion and check internal hemorrhages, especially in childbirth. Likewise, it hastened labor, and was administered for brain and bladder troubles. We were warned that there were not enough "simples" on the list to cure us if we ate toadstools, so the rank and luscious-looking mushroom was left strictly alone as an edible growth for the family.

Warts.

Warts were said to appear upon the hands of an unfortunate child after close association with toads. This belief persisted despite the fact that the excrescences decorated the phalanges of those who never handled toads. Some of the alleged cures were quite as inconsistent as the claim for contracting warts.

A green, fresh-barked willow was selected. An incision was made through the bark which was loosened from the inner body for an inch or so. The warts were cut, or pricked until they bled freely. The blood from them was transferred to the slit space in the willow. The incision was closed and bound. When the bark had healed, the warts were to have disappeared.

Diseases also were said to disappear by the sealing route. For a lung cough the hair, finger and toe nails of the patient were clipped. The fragments were let into an incision in an oak tree, and the opening sealed with clay; presto! the cough was gone. If the clippings were burned and the ashes given internally jaundice was driven from the system.

Warts were more or less effectively treated with a poultice of stable manure. The warm blood of a hog applied to warts was said to remove them, and if the blood were taken internally, bed wetting was to cease. Selling warts seemed most in favor as it required no effort or inconvenience. A bean, button, nut, needle or any worthless object served the purpose of sale.

Burning off warts with lye, or the direct application of a heated iron, created a sore that made one forget the former existence of the wart by remembering the intensity of the burn; moreover, the growth may have returned later. Sticking pins through a wart and heating the metal in the candle-flame was a test of endurance which the youngsters semed to enjoy as it indicated to them they were able to withstand pain with the fortitude shown by their elders.

Poisoning.

One of the many painful afflictions of the pioneers was being "pizened" from contact with the wood ivies and various skin irritating plants which were so generally and generously distributed. I do not remember that any one of our family ever was poisoned, but I have seen victims with eyes swollen shut and face so puffed and discolored that they were unrecognizable.

The immunity which our family seemed to enjoy must have been a natural one, and not due to care in handling or avoiding the poisonous growths. Indeed, care could not have been exercised, for a woodman or hunter daily was subjected to their presence throughout the summer. It was not necessary that a person who was susceptible to ivy-poison should handle the plant. Even its presence, or the wind blowing from it, seemed to infect such an individual; and contact with one who had handled it was sure to bring the irritating result.

The poisoned surface of the skin was poulticed with liveforever leaves and cream or sour dock pulp. If the affected surface was large, moistened gunpowder which had been mixed under a knife or rubbed in the palm of the hand until the grit disappeared, was smeared upon it. Copperas water later was applied with a swab. A case of poisoning or any skin eruption, although unpleasant and painful was thought to be a fortunate affliction, in that irritation or sores on the external surface reduced the probability of internal congestion which might induce a long siege of serious illness.

A persistent and very troublesome skin irritator was the ringworm. Its progress around the circle usually could be stopped with a bath of catnip tea or walnut-hull juice. Erysipelas was poulticed with waterweed pulp, or bathed with juice pressed from the plant.

Bleeding.

When a patient was bleeding from wounds the immediate concern was to arrest the flow of blood, notwithstand-

ing the fact that veins were opened and blood-letting practiced for various ailments or no ailment, except that the victim was too full blooded. Anyone who could use a razor was qualified to bleed himself or another. An incision usually was made in the arm and one was permitted to watch his own blood trickle away. An even less inspiring sight was to watch the work of leeches. These bloodsuckers were obtained from the crick or a pond, by wading into the water. The parasites soon would attach themselves to the bare feet and legs of the procurer. The leeches were loosened before becoming securely settled upon the flesh, and then were placed upon the swollen or discolored surface of the anatomy which needed attention from the suckers. As the blood was drained the leeches filled to an enormous size. When the capacity was reached the blood-reducers released their hold on the victim, and they were thrown into the discard.

Usually two or more bloodsuckers were placed upon a surface for relief. The more numerous they were the quicker the work was done. The jaws of these little beasties were so constructed it was difficult to pull them from their moorings once they were attached for the regular order of business. Salty water poured upon them would disqualify them for a time, however.

Oils.

Many medicinal oils could be obtained from plants, but the process was slow and bothersome, with small returns, and we gave little attention to reducing the vegetation in that way. We had a fairly constant supply of possum-fat, skunk and coon oil, goose grease and fish oil, in addition to mutton tallow, lard, venison and fowl fat.

The soft oils, beside for cooking, were used on stiff joints or on open sores and for softening a scabbed surface. They were given internally for colds and sore throats. Skunk oil, if properly handled, was as pure and neutral smelling as any other oil. The soft fats served their pur-

pose as hair oils, while the tallows were used for boot-grease, for candles, and weapon salve. A salve of tallow, rosin and beeswax was a good "sticker" for cuts, cracks or barked shins. Fishworm oil was rank both in smell and the method of reducing. A glass flask was filled with earth worms. A hempen string was tied about the neck of the bottle and it was hung in the sun. When the mass of worms had disintegrated, a residue of oil could be drained off. This oil was credited with the property of "limbering up" stiff joints. It was necessary to time the making of this oil to the right time of the moon, or the finished product soon "spiled."

There was no relationship between castor oil and castorium. The latter was a brownish substance from glands in the groin of the beaver. Small doses were administered as a stimulant and for convulsions, and it also was used in severe cases of fevers. The muskrat, also, yielded a brown gland substance called musk. Medicinally it was used the same as castorium and was the basis for perfume. A musk-bag and its contents were so sickeningly strong that our boys did not bother with them except for the purpose of tantalizing members of the family or company. The presence of a civet cat was about as welcome as a boy with a supply of musk.

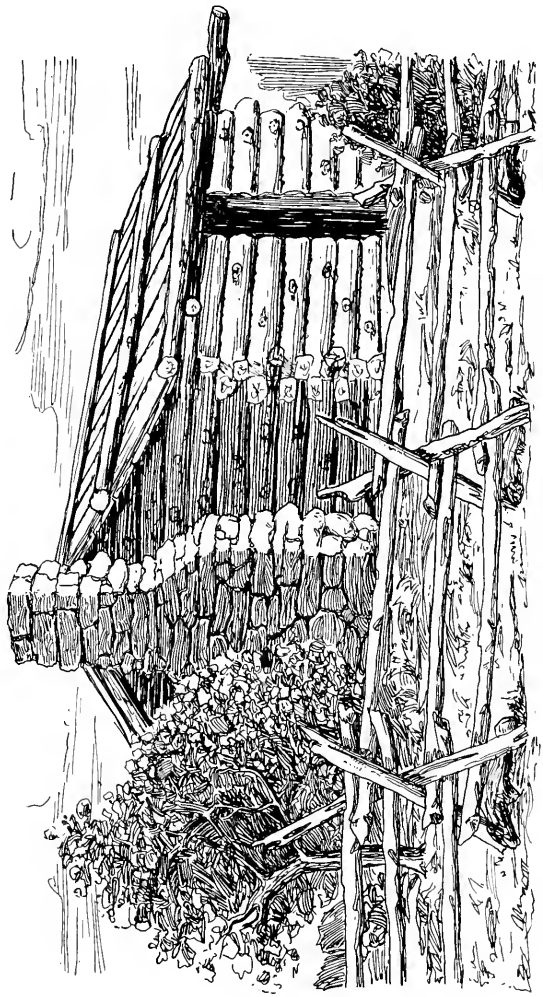
Drug Purchases.

We purchased, in addition to the home-remedy preparations, as soon as they could be procured from the apothecary shop in Des Moines, small quantities of sulphur, turpentine, camphor gum and alum. Later it was necessary to procure red precipitate, calomel, quinine and nitre.

When herbs were not strong enough, or their action was delayed, the druggists mixtures were brought into line. Turpentine to relieve bruises and expel internal parasites. Sulphur was to direct the poison through the skin, and red precipitate was spread upon the skin for eruptions, while burned, powdered alum was to heal mouth cankers, and

nitre to relieve the kidneys. Calomel was a general internal cleanser which was liable to salivate the patient, and quinine was the qualified fever-breaker. Camphor eased a "broken breast" and reduced the flow of milk.

What one may think of the many mixtures and unusual remedies mentioned makes little difference; the fact remains that their use was general and the lists given are but a few from the extensive ones which might have been recorded by the old grannies or the doctors who administered the dope three-quarters of a century ago.



THE IOWA LOG CABIN.

APPENDIX I.

Biographical.

Wilson Brewer was born in 1804, at Highcastle homestead on the James river in Virginia. His parents were Nathan and Marie (Wilson) Brewer.

Nathan Brewer, his wife and four children, emigrated to Henry county, Indiana, in 1808, when the subject of this sketch was four years of age. Father frequently related an incident of the journey which was impressed upon his memory either by its vividness or from repetition by his parents.

While passing through a mountainous section of the country a storm arose and the movers camped to await the return of calm weather. A bolt of lightning struck a tree within a few feet of the covered wagon and killed the milch cow which supplied sustenance to the small children of the party. He likewise declared that his old plantation home surroundings were very clear to him.

Wilson Brewer was married to Lucy Stanley in 1826. To this union was born Andrew Jackson Brewer; but in giving birth to the son the mother yielded her life.

The second marriage of Wilson Brewer was in 1830. He chose Margaret Moore, the seventh daughter of a French couple, Jonathan and Frances Galliene Moore, who was the seventh daughter of her parents.

The courageous, pioneering spirit of Wilson Brewer and his wife, Margaret Moore-Brewer, was a natural endowment from their revolutionary progenitors who abandoned personal interests, suffered bodily discomfort and endured material disaster to maintain the larger principle of service. One readily can understand that nothing less than the pioneer hardships of frontier life could satisfy them, so they made their way westward in 1848, and founded the town of Newcastle, now Webster City, Iowa.

The memory of my father is a very sacred one to me; if I can live in the minds of my children as perenially as his influence remains with me, a pleasing immortality is assured.

Wilson Brewer did not give great attention to business detail; rather, he preferred to enlist and direct the energies and enterprises of others. He never was an official justice of the peace, but constantly was consulted in neighborhood disagreements or business transactions. He deprecated the acquisition of large tracts of land by non-resident companies, and declared that such a course subdued the spirit of progress.

He cared nothing for the glory of individual achievement. Money meant to him only the enlargement of a possibility to assist others; and he accomplished an enduring good by bringing together men with enthusiastic ideas and expansive minds. I greatly regret that his life could not have been prolonged until the further fruition of the town's future had been realized.

My father was hospitable to a fault; his last meal was shared with neighbors or newcomers. His generosity was the community by-word; and although he drove a shrewd bargain in a big deal, a close-fisted man was beneath his contempt. He was the soul of honor; his word was as good as a gilt-edged bond, and money lost in an unlucky wager was as promptly paid as an assessment of property taxes.

Wilson Brewer was a democrat in politics as well as an essentially democratic individual. Personal exclusiveness or aristocratic ideas were very displeasing to him, and any preferment or privilege for a class was denounced in no uncertain terms. He never failed in the assistance promised to neighbors or newcomers, and punctuality in such performance was his abiding rule.

This intrepid pioneer traversed the forests of Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin and Iowa. He took the initiative in locating in a virgin country apart from the throng of people. He could not be daunted either by wild beasts or severe weather. He was alert for the possibilities of nat-

ural dangers and agile in their avoidance. He safely passed the perils and obstructions of travel; he calmly contemplated the hazards of exposure to weather and failure of crops; and he wrested from field and forest the needful subsistence for his family. A square-dealer himself, he was slow to suspect a man of unfair intentions; and in impersonating that spirit of equity he failed to protect himself from the undeveloped human aggressor; and so yielded his life at the age of fifty-two years.

Wilson Brewer died in December, 1856. He had labored diligently to locate our city and promote its interests and was at the threshold of its tangible accomplishment. His death not only was a municipal misfortune but it also was a domestic calamity.

My mother knew absolutely nothing of business methods. All legal papers—land patents, deeds, mortgages and notes—were delivered to the attorney, W. G. Berkley, and the administrator, A. J. Brewer, who died within two months. Much misunderstanding, interminable delays and technical tangles ensued and extended throughout the Civil war. The papers were carelessly looked after and father's holdings of land and personal property were dissipated in the adjustment and settlement of the estate. Mother died March 27, 1896.

The immediate cause of the death of Wilson Brewer—founder and promoter of Newcastle—was the effect of a knife wound inflicted by a boastful character named Prendegast.

A presidential election bet had been made by the two men. Father wagered a twenty dollar gold coin against an overcoat of that price. After the election of James Buchanan, my father having won the bet, called upon Prendegast, in the store of Barton and Robinson on Bank and Seneca streets, to fulfil the agreement. but he refused to comply with the request.

A dispute arose. Prendegast, who was a young man, clinched my father and bent him over the counter. With a knife, which he evidently had in readiness, the assailant

stabbed his victim several times in the back at the left shoulder. The clothing was cut into shreds, but only two thrusts penetrated the flesh. The wounds were not thought to be serious; and father requested that his assailant, who had been drinking, should not be taken into custody.

A few days elapsed. When it was found that the victim's injuries would prove fatal, Prendegast eluded the officers and fled the country.

APPENDIX II.

In Loving Memory of My Father.

With hopeful heart and steady step, you faced with glowing eyes,
The promise fair of Iowa, in fields, and streams, and skies.
The woodland wild through which you roamed and breathed the free, fresh air,
Has vanished like the bright mirage fades from the heavens fair.
The hunting-grounds you traversed o'er with softly shodden feet,
Are marked with many mansions fair, and miles of paved street.
The gushing spring where once you bowed, and sipped its nectar sweet,
Now sings through many silvery pipes, the laughing lips to meet.
The miry swamps and thickets dense, the wastes of sodden soil,
Were marked as heritage, by you, for careful thrifty toil.
The covert wild, of feathered folk, the staggard's safe retreat,
By time and toil are well transformed with opulence replete.
The unbridged streams and trackless hills, long since fulfilled your dream;
On rails of steel o'er which they race, the iron horses scream.
The schooner and the old ox-team you gave especial care,
By motor cars are now displaced, and bird-men fill the air.
Far, far afield you saw the light; and so, in years agone,
You held ajar the door of hope, for those who here were drawn.
The city which your service sought—the vision then in view—
Has since assumed substantial shape, with prospects not a few.
Your ringing voice, for three score years, has silent been; but still
The spirit of your early work, keeps grateful hearts athrill.
The soil so rich, and well beloved, you charmed to fruitfulness,
Now folds itself about thy form, in silent, firm caress.
The busy bees and flitting birds, sing soft above your bed
The tuneful requiem of change, in time's unending tread.
The circling planets sweep through space, and finite powers defy;
And your dear dust helps to conserve the vital-force supply.

APPENDIX III.

Foreword to the Brassfield Version of the Lott-Indian Tragedies.

I am writing this story as related by Major Brassfield as an account of the events which transpired between Henry Lott and the Indians. It, therefore, is not written with the desire to minimize the efforts made, or results gained by those who have made researches on this subject.

I realize that anyone gathering historical data assumes a very difficult and tedious task. Unless journals have been kept dates and details are conflicting. They only can be approximately correct, and writers frequently find themselves submerged in the amplified and embellished reports which it often is impossible to co-ordinate into authentic accounts. Discrepancies, therefore, without intent, must arise and the seeker along a scarcely discernable trail discovers how easily mistakes may be made.

Diverse and conflicting accounts of a street brawl immediately after its occurrence are reported by the various witnesses of the happening. How much more difficult to procure dependable evidence when the participants to a struggle or the actors in a tragedy have passed across the stage of life. How much more obscure the pathway when distance has enveloped the outline of events with the dimness of uncertainty which makes hearsay evidence the best —the only source of information.

I shall not try to reconcile the various printed statements; but shall tell, in my own words with the connecting historical links, the story related by Major Brassfield which indelibly was impressed on my youthful memory. Were it possible for me to rehearse the story in the Major's own words, his quaint, deliberate, convincing expression; his accurate, if lengthy, adherence to detail, the account would be far more interesting.

Henry Lott's early trouble with the redskins, and the subsequent Indian killings by him were separated by several years of time and miles of distance—the first occurred in what now is Webster county, the second in Humboldt county; but for the sake of brevity I recount the opening and later parts of the tragedy as a connected story. There is the discrepancy of a year between the earliest account of the Lott family trouble and the time given by Major Brassfield. It should be assumed, however, that Brassfield knew the year of his arrival in Iowa; the birthdays of his children; and when he left Hamilton county; and that he kept the record clear in that way.

The Major did not mention the son of Lott whom historians state was frozen to death at the time of the Indian raid at Lott's premises; nor did he mention another son who, according to various versions of the massacre, assisted his father in the slaughter. The communication on buckskin, from Lott to his neighbor furnished the sure clue to the perpetrator of the crime; and the injured Indian lad's gesticulations were the only means of knowing what passed between Lott, the braves, and the old chief at the wigwam before the hunting trip.

Brassfield called it a freak of fate that the pioneer lines of Henry Lott and himself were placed so closely together. He and Lott came to Iowa almost at the same time; he was present after the first trouble with Lott and the Indians; they were absent from home part of the time in 1849; he and Lott moved north at about the same time, and he was present after the closing of the Iowa chapter of Indian history in which Henry Lott was the active figure.

Major Brassfield left his ancestral southern plantation in 1847, and with oxen and covered wagons came to northern Iowa. Henry Lott arrived soon after and squatted almost within a stone's throw of him. The former in what now is Hamilton county, and the latter in what now is Webster county. The two white families were the only ones in the immediate vicinity at the time of the early trouble between Lott and the Indians.

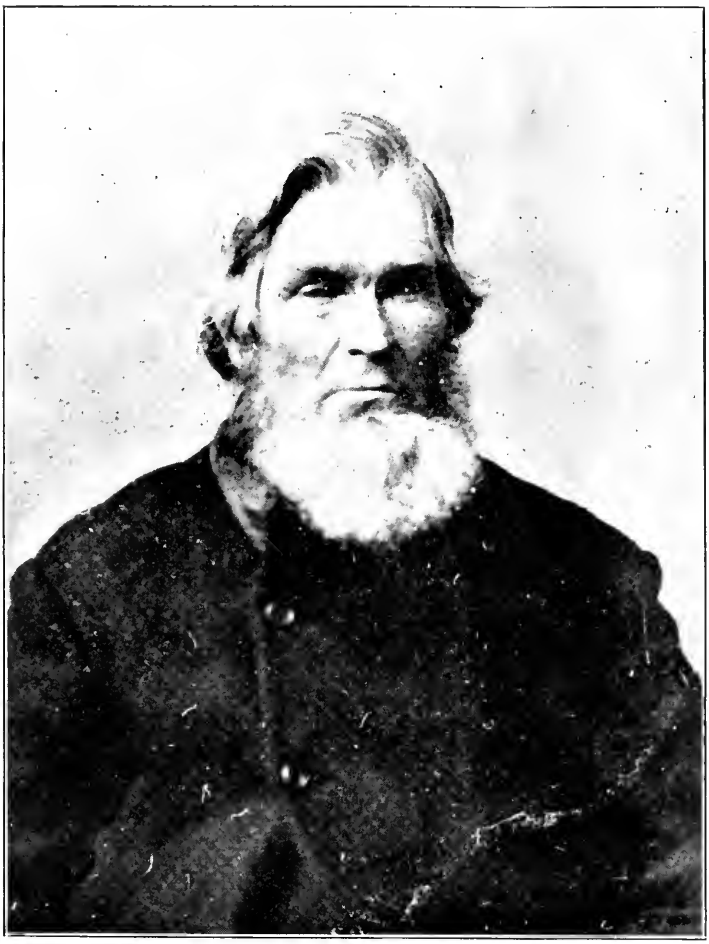
Major Brassfield was a careful student of nature. He observed the practices of his neighbor Lott, as he did the habits of the wild game which he hunted. He studied the banks of the White-Fox, Skunk and Eagle creeks. He knew perfectly the lay of the land along the Des Moines and Boone rivers, and was as familiar with the ground about what later was called Lott's creek and Bloody-run as he was with his own dooryard.

Major Brassfield was a man of few words, but he emphasized every one of them. He was absolutely dependable as a friend and quite as dependable as an enemy. He possessed in abundance the alert, vigorous, indomitable, persistent and uncompromising spirit of the Pilgrim fathers. His memory was a very retentive one, and until his death at the age of eighty-five years, he was considered to be authority on pioneer settlement data and reminiscences.

I am very glad to state that Hamilton county's record is free from any accounts of serious trouble with Indians.

The question arises—if one wanders into the realm of speculation—whether if Lott had fallen into the hands of the outraged Indian band under the leadership of Scarlet Point, the subsequent massacre by the redskins at Spirit Lake might not have been averted.

There may have been older wounds as well as more immediate, although less inhuman causes which precipitated the massacre of the Spirit Lake settlers. It seems to be a well authenticated fact, however, that a part of Scarlet Point's band participated, and the Indian boy, Deer-Foot, who in January, 1854, escaped the bludgeon of Henry Lott, and who had developed into a fighting, fearless and aggressive brave—something of a menace to settlers—was among the number who led the Dickinson county raid in 1857.



MAJOR BRASSFIELD AT 83.

Major Brassfield's Story of Henry Lott's Trouble With the Indians.

The shack of Henry Lott was only a short distance from my first cabin. He was a good, but not an intimate neighbor; and we, of course, exchanged the usual favors of pioneer life.

Whatever the peculiarities or propensities of Lott may have been, no one could accuse him of being a personal coward. He was daringly reckless and often venturesome to the point of foolhardiness. He did not qualify the assertion that his purpose in coming west was to accumulate property, so he did not emigrate for the love of hardship or with the hope to help humanity. He declared, however, that a dead Indian told no tales and harmed nobody, and in that faith he was willing to serve.

Henry Lott was not a man to inspire confidence; and his careless, often aggressive methods with the Indians were a constant source of anxiety to my family and to the settlers to the south and west. His besetting sin found expression in furnishing fire-water to the natives and while their brains were muddled with liquor he readily gained an advantage in trading with them. Such sharp practices, many times, strained their relations to the breaking point; although the Indians were simple minded and did not know the value of their possessions. Fur and ponies were their only trading stock, and on various occasions numbers of their ponies disappeared, some of which were located with Lott and forcibly taken from him. Other bunches of the animals, supposedly, were driven by him to the settlements south and east and sold. At one time the Indians located a number of their ponies on the premises of Lott and claimed them. He flatly refused to surrender the horses, asserting that he had bought them while the braves were drunk. On this occasion several white men, whose appearance was not prepossessing, were present at the conference—envoys for the transfer of the ponies—and the Indians did not press their claim. A second depredation

of the same kind followed immediately, and very soon a third one was reported.

On the heels of these losses a young squaw, White Fawn, took up her abode at Lott's cabin for the purpose of nursing his wife whose health was precarious. Saving the lives of palefaces was not the mission of redskins, so the already enraged Indians called upon Lott. Chief Two Fingers demanded that he leave the country or suffer the consequence. Lott, however, stood his ground until part of the stock had been killed and the stable burned. He finally was forced to flee for his life and leave his family behind. Meanwhile, White Fawn mounted one of the ponies and came to my cabin for assistance. With my two sons, George and Tollman, I at once repaired to Lott's shack, reaching there after his enforced and hurried departure.

Mrs. Lott, a frail, nervous woman, wholly unfitted for frontier life, we found in a state of utter collapse from excitement and fright. The chief and older warriors stoically were smoking their pipes. Two lithe and sinewy bucks were searching the cabin for articles of adornment and eatables, while a lad of 15 had bared himself to the waist and was preparing a meal. White Fawn finished the cooking and we all partook of the repast.

My family always had been on friendly terms with the Indians, and for the time, I succeeded in allaying their anger and inducing them to leave. Although they had fired Lott's stables, killed his stock and destroyed his provisions the Indians had made no attempt to inflict punishment upon his wife or violate her person; and during the intervals of calmness she spoke very gratefully of their conduct toward her.

A storm of some severity arose and for several days we remained with the family hoping for the arrival of the white fugitive, but he did not come. Finally, with the return of moderate weather we yielded to the frenzied entreaties of the almost demented wife and took up the trail to the southward, having improvised a sled upon which we

transported the stricken invalid. We, however, had made but a very short distance toward Mineral Ridge (*see foot note 1) when the poor woman died. With great difficulty we dug a shallow grave and buried Mrs. Lott at an angle in the trail near a large boulder. (*See foot note 2.)

White Fawn, who was devoted to her pale-faced sister, accompanied us on the southward trip, but she could not be induced to return. Reluctantly we turned our faces homeward; and as long as we could see her, White Fawn dejectedly stood beside the frozen clods which covered the remains of her departed companion.

A day or two later Lott, who had aroused the settlers at Pea's Point and Mineral Ridge and enlisted the services of the friendly Johny Green band of Indians (*see foot note 3) and the neighbors, Pea, Crooks and Sparks, returned to find his home deserted. In company with Lott and his party we retraced our steps to the place where we had buried the body of his wife. Over her grave the husband voiced a terrible threat to the effect that: although it might take years to accomplish his purpose he would finally "get even" with the Indians for what he, in his unreasoning anger, was pleased to call the killing of his wife. He did not, however, immediately seek to execute his vengeance.

Henry Lott abandoned his demolished abode and moved restlessly about the country. He, a little later, located in Des Moines and remarried. In 1849 he traversed again the old trail and with his family, returned to the site of his former misfortunes. The latter part of the same season my wife and I visited in Mahaska county, where early in November our son Aaron Brassfield was born, after which event we returned to our home on the Boone river.

Lott's relations with the Indians while he lived with his second wife were comparatively neutral and friendly. Mrs. Lott exercised a strong restraining influence upon her

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[1]Mineral Ridge or Ridgeport is eight miles south of Stratford.
[2]Author's Note.—The body of Mrs. Lott may have been removed later.
[3]Chemisne. Only the English equivalent of Indian names was used.

husband and the fact that only small numbers of friendly Indians appeared at intervals gave an added assurance to the settlers that Lott's feeling of hatred toward the natives was diminished or outgrown.

The death of Mrs. Lott in 1853 was a severe loss to the neighbors as well as to her family. She was a strong, capable and sympathetic personality who made and retained friends without apparent effort. During her last illness her husband said, many times: "If she dies my inspiration will be gone; I cannot go on creditably without her."

Mrs. Lott was buried near the old log cabin clearing where the summer's sunbeams filtered through the shimmering leaves of monarch maple trees, and through whose boughs the winter's blasts crashed or sighed unceasingly. (*See foot note 1.)

The home of Henry Lott again was broken and he decided to move forward along the river into Humboldt county where, in company with another white man, he trapped and traded with the Indians on the Des Moines. One of the trading staples found on his provision wagon was whisky, and the demand never seemed to exceed the supply.

Settlers near the Des Moines and Boone rivers had become more numerous by this time. On account of the severe weather of January and February, 1853, and a greater number of hunters in the active work of killing game, a serious season of scarcity threatened. I began to look about for better hunting-grounds; so, during the summer, accompanied by two of my sons, I prospected in a northerly direction and returned home at intervals.

We located and built a cabin in the fall of '53, on the west bank of the Boone river at Liberty. My son Perry was born at Hook's Point in December, 1853, and my wife

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*It is evident from Major Brassfield's account that the monument dedicated to Mrs. Lott indicates the resting place of the second, instead of his first wife, unless, as before stated, her body may have been re-interred at that place.

and family were not brought to Wright county until the spring of 1854.

Henry Lott renewed his acquaintance with me after I had settled in his neck-o'-the-woods, and occasionally I crossed his trail while in the pursuit of game. His distressing and regrettable domestic experiences had changed his appearance, but had made him entirely heedless of personal safety. His aversion for the Indians after having slumbered for a season, seemed to have taken on a new intensity.

The roving band of Two Fingers (*foot note 1) had stretched their teepees and built their wickups on the bank of Bloody Run (*foot note 2) and with reckless bravado Lott visited their camp, smoked the pipe of peace and freely dispensed fire-water until the bucks were stupefied with liquor (*foot note 3). The chief did not indulge freely in the revelry, but accompanied the venturesome trader to a near-by gulch to hunt.

A study of the surroundings made it apparent that immediately after discharging his gun at the game—and before the old chieftain could rise from his crouching position and reload his musket—Lott stole upon the unsuspecting Indian, dealt him a terrific blow from behind, splitting his head with the tomahawk of Two Fingers which the assailant evidently had borrowed from his victim for the purpose.

Lott, evidently assuming that the bucks in their tepees still were "dead drunk" and the squaws sleeping, he revisited the camp after nightfall; murderously assailed and left for dead—supposedly—every member of the little Indian band. Among the victims were the squaw and pappooses of Chief Two Fingers. The pappooses, Hawk-eye and Flying Wind, were twin braves of about fifteen years, whose comeliness, fleetness and alertness were sources of great joy and pride to the old chieftain.

Two of the number in camp, however, escaped death.

[1]Si-dom-i-na-do-tah.
[2]The name Bloody Run was adopted after the tragedy.
[3]The account as understood from Deer-Foot.

Although severely mutilated, a young brave, Deer-Foot, and a young squaw, Evening Shadow, made their way to the camping-ground of Scarlet Point.

Deer-Foot told the terrible tale of the slaughter of his kinsmen by the paleface who professed friendship. The bucks in Scarlet Point's band were for starting in immediate pursuit of the perpetrator of the crime, but the chief's wiser council prevailed and they repaired to Fort Dodge for advice and assistance.

The report of the massacre spread rapidly and was freely discussed by the indignant settlers who hurriedly sought the scene of the butchery. Some of my neighbors were not amicably disposed toward the Indians, but they did believe in the principle of fair play. I was among the early arrivals at the place where the bloody deed was committed. (*Foot note 1.)

Picked men were detailed to follow the fleeing miscreant, and other willing helpers assisted in burying the dead savages. Investigation verified the statements of Deer-Foot. The hunting trail of Lott and Two Fingers was located in a ravine and led to the body of the slain chieftain.

The blow which caused the death of Two Fingers must have been struck with a steady hand, for the head of the victim was cleft in twain from the frontal bone backward and the tomahawk was imbedded in the brain. His empty firearm was tightly clenched in the hands of the dead Indian. Later, there was found tied to a sapling near the site of Lott's camping place an unsigned message written with the point of a charred stick on a piece of buckskin, and addressed: "To my old neighbor, Major Brassfield." It read: "I told you I would get even. I have kept my word."

The frozen body of Two Fingers was carried to camp in the blanket found upon the hunting trail. The covering

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[1]The location of this massacre of Indians was at a point in Humbold county about seven miles north of Dakota City, and thirteen miles northwest of Goldfield—as the crow flies—and near where Bloody Run empties into the Des Moines East Fork.

had been cast aside while pursuing the elk, the carcass of which had been dressed and loaded into Lott's schooner. Neither food nor furs were to be found in the Indian tepees.

The scene at camp was a grewsome one. The whisky furnished by the white man had done its work well. The bodies of the braves gave very little evidence of resistance to the assailant. While helping to arrange for the burial of the victims I was horrified to find among them the body of White Fawn, the comely young squaw who last had been seen by me at the grave of Mrs. Lott. The threat of Lott to "get even," which was made half a decade earlier at the burial place of his wife more than a score of miles distant, had been paid with compound interest.

The Indians were buried near the scene of the massacre. Scarlet Point's band (*foot note 1) made no demonstration of disapproval, and stoically waived the right of tribal burial. The chief, however, insistently asked that: when located, Lott should be turned over to his braves for punishment according to the code of Indian ethics. He assured the Fort Dodge authorities and the posse who accompanied him to camp that if this were done no more trouble would ensue—he would break camp and vamose to distant hunting-grounds.

It was thought best to promise compliance with the request, as great uneasiness was manifested by the settlers; but it was not necessary to redeem the promise, for Henry Lott, the shrewd white man, fled the country and did not return.

His wagon course was followed down the river, but a "skift" of snow fell during the night of the pursuit and partially obliterated the trail. Having in his favor the several days' start, his pursuers decided it was best to abandon the man hunt and return home.

The successful flight of Henry Lott caused rejoicing instead of regret. A troublesome individual was removed from our midst and the authorities were relieved of the

[1]Ink-pa-du-tah. Said to have been a relative of Two Fingers.

necessity for redeeming the pledge to deliver Lott, alive, to Scarlet Point, thereby escaping the responsibility for his mistreatment—perhaps death—at the hands of the Indians.

The summer following I received a message through the mail. Like the former one, it was written on a square of buckskin, but with pen and ink. It was rolled carefully about a smooth, round stick and securely tied with a rawhide thong, and said: "To my neighbor, Major Brassfield. I am on my way toward the setting sun. Several more Indians have been bitten by my good shooting-iron since I last saw you. I have a fine scalp-lock decoration now, and intend to add to it occasionally. That is what I am here for." —Signed—"Lott."

APPENDIX IV.

Author's Note.

The intuitive desire for fair play and the wish to help a hapless victim, supplemented by some research and mature reflection, has induced me to write this personal estimate of the Indian attitude toward White men of pioneer times.

The responsibility for this opinion rests with me instead of with my mother. Her account of the Lott tragedy, however, furnished the occasion for its expression.

I shall not attempt an account of the Spirit Lake massacre. Its salient features have been traced by many Iowa historians; and a detailed description of the tragedy has been written by one of the women who was taken captive by the Indians. Abby Gardner-Sharp's book may be found in many Iowa libraries.

My expression of individual opinion is not given to criticize the spirit of growth which made necessary the acquirement of the red man's hunting grounds; nor is it given to censure the men who were instrumental in its accomplishment. It is a comparison of human propensities which, under the same conditions, produce the same results regardless of color or degree of civilization.

A statement of fact, made without prejudice, should receive judicial consideration; so I hope to touch the note of expansive fairness which at this distance may make it possible to discuss amicably, and determine calmly the natural estimate of human values, whether the individuals under discussion be red or white-skinned.

The Spirit Lake settlers were a peaceable and unoffending people; that they should have been massacred in retaliation either for fancied grievances or real injuries, is

most deplorable. The trouble serves well, however, to emphasize the prevalence of the idea: "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," which persists, not alone among savage tribes, but among the peoples of so-called civilized nations.

Strange to relate we frequently find those who claim the highest culture and humane tendencies are first to break all bonds of restraint, ruthlessly invade the liberty and usurp the rights of unoffending victims. For confirmation of this statement we only need to enumerate the many home and neighborhood disturbances, the state-wide political upheavals, and the trade depredations committed by destructive armies of conquest.

There can be no extenuation of the Spirit Lake massacre except that the perpetrators were unfamiliar with the teaching to turn the other cheek when smitten by the enemy. Their sense of mutuality and reciprocity, notwithstanding, seems to have been very well developed.

There were, doubtless, stored in the minds of the Indians many, to them, unjust minor incidents which goaded them to active enmity; and when nine of them were butchered by Henry Lott, forbearance must have ceased to be a virtue. This massacre of Indians seems to have been the crowning act of hostility remembered against the settlers, and for which they retaliated at Spirit Lake—the only massacre of Iowans by Indians, so far as I have been able to learn.

Major Brassfield affirmed that Henry Lott was thought to be less desirable as a neighbor than the cheated and mistreated red man who was unable to explain his grievances or good intentions. We readily can understand, however, that were a foreign race foolhardy enough to attempt to dispossess the white man, destroy his possessions, appropriate his belongings or take his life if expedient, there would be more strenuous opposition, more terrific destruction of property and more bloody reprisals required than could have been conceived by the savage mind of half a century ago.

An historical account states that while the fragmentary

band of Sioux Indians, although apparently friendly and listed as pensioners of Uncle Sam, had not at that time, received their portion of revenue for the sale or cession of Iowa lands. Isn't it possible that the distance of the general government from the danger zone may have caused delay, not to say apathy or indifference to the niceties of business adjustment; or that the envoys who came to ensure safety to the settlers may have been mistaken or careless in the equitable distribution of Indian payments, thereby raising the question of unfair dealing in the minds of the former possessors of the land?

Mrs. Sharp, referring to the withholding of annuities of Indian bands until they had helped to capture or kill Inkpaduta, although these assistant bands had nothing to do with the massacre, says: "We will only say that it was the opinion of some of the Indian officials, and the general intelligent sentiment of the people of Minnesota at the time, that the apparently friendly disposition of the Sioux nation should not be endangered by subjecting them to wants, incident to their present condition, thus leading them into temptation and to commit depredations which the withholding their annuities might leave them exposed."

Imposing dangerous and unusual burdens upon friendly bands of Indians was not the business of those in command of affairs, and the condition which obtained after the return of the two captives existed before, as indicated by various official reports.

We virtuously assert that Iowa lands were bought from the Indians, but note the price. For a part of the Neutral strip the government in 1830 paid the Indians two cents—some authorities say three cents—per acre; and in 1842, for the cession by the Sac and Fox tribes east of the Missouri river, ten cents per acre was paid.

The treaty with the Sac and Fox tribes stipulated that they were to relinquish their part of the then territory of Iowa, but were allowed three years in which to evacuate. The Sioux Indians occupying northern Iowa and parts of

what now is Minnesota and Dakota were not friendly with the Sac and Fox tribes.

The Sacs and Foxes moved westward to leave Iowa, as per treaty, and a part of the Sioux contingent followed them; thus, for some time separating themselves from the parent tribe. These bands being absent in 1851 when the treaty ceding Minnesota lands was made, they, at that time had received no share of the payments due them.

The non-payment of money to them was stated by Charles Flandreau, who later was Indian agent. They were absent, he says: "and took no part in the treaty." These braves came under the leadership of Inkpaduta and Sidominadotah, and the latter became the victim of Henry Lott.

Referring to the northern border Indian trouble during the civil war, Major Flandreau makes this declaration:

"Much dissatisfaction was engendered among the Indians by the administration of the treaties under the general government * * *. The rebellion of the south was at its height. The payment due in June or July, 1862, was much delayed. The Indians were hungry and angry. Nothing special has been discovered to have taken place to which the outbreak can be immediately attributed."

Discussing the causes in a report by Geo. L. Davenport to Governor Kirkwood of the western frontier situation, he says:

"I am of the opinion the cause of dissatisfaction among many of the tribes of Indians is caused mainly by the general government paying the annuities to the Indians in goods instead of money. * * * He thinks the agent is cheating him. He thinks he is wronged, although the agent explains to him that cotton and wool have gone up in price and that his money does not buy as much as before. It is difficult to make the Indian understand or believe it, but pay him in dollars and then he knows the government has fulfilled its part."

Governor Grimes, after the Spirit Lake massacre, established a supply of arms and ammunition in Webster and

Dickinson counties. He said in his message to the general assembly of Iowa in 1858:

"I do not anticipate any further trouble from Indians. Rumors in regard to further difficulty can generally be traced to interested persons, seeking to accomplish some ulterior purpose."

What such ulterior purpose was the governor does not declare but his statement would not indicate an actively unfriendly attitude of the Indians. The fact, likewise, that from 1853, when the soldiers were transferred from Fort Dodge to Fort Ridgley, Minnesota, there was not for several years a single military organization in the state, would not indicate Indian hostility.

Many years ago America's sage and benefactor, Benjamin Franklin, said: "It appears that almost every war between Indians and Whites in our country has been caused by injustices of the latter toward the former."

When we reflect that the Indian's account of this or any other story never has been written; when we remember that re-written stories often become one-sided; when we realize that the sufferings of a human being may be equally acute under a sun-browned cuticle or beneath a pure white skin; when we admit that savage instincts still persist in the white race—then we shall be more just in our judgment than we have been heretofore.

It is quite believable there were unrecorded early invasions of the rights of both Indians and white men, but the court records of today indicate a similar condition existing between members of the white race alone.

Historians assert that Henry Lott committed many depredations against property and made many unjust and demoralizing deals with the Indians. I imagine these acts would arouse the resentment of almost any red-blooded white man; and were his revenge immediately taken the court of the common people, doubtless, would declare it to be justifiable.

The Spirit Lake massacre was committed over half a century ago; but was it more distressing than the up-to-date

feuds of the South which end only with the death of all members of one or more families? Was this massacre more deserving of execration than the recent bloody strife of settlers with western plainsmen in the effort to break up large holdings of grazing lands for homes?

A condition was presented in these disturbances very similar to the one which confronted the Indian; and in this particular parallel the scales tip in favor of the red man. He sought only to conserve his food supply, while the greedy holder of grazing-lands sought to accumulate money benefits at the expense, and to the detriment of suffering home-seekers.

We read that when the Fort Ridgley soldiers were prepared to pursue the Indians and the Spirit Lake captives, the detachment was recalled and detailed to the scene of Mormon troubles. These religionists, earlier had been driven from their homes by the persecutions of their brothers of the same race and color, because they did not worship God as did their neighbors.

When established in their Mormon stronghold they are alleged to have returned blow for blow to innocent western emigrants. "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" culminated, in this case, in the Mountain Meadows massacre, which now is conceded to have been of fanatical Mormon instigation.

Are we justified, with such common cruelties fresh in our minds, in declaring the Indian to be a more intolerant savage than the white man?

Could the resentment of Indians be more unreasoning, their enmity more virulent than the race antipathy—not to say hatred—of white men for negroes? This prejudice culminates periodically in the most atrocious butcherings and burnings of black men by their white brothers. Does the taking of a white man's scalp as a trophy by an Indian deserve a greater degree of censure than the collection of fragments of negro flesh as souvenirs by the white executors?

Charles Bancroft says: "As for scalping, that was originated by the palefaces, so the Indian cannot be blamed for adopting it. The colonists offered bounties for scalps of the Indians. The warriors' scalps were the most expensive. Those of the squaws came next. The friendly Indians were induced to scalp their fellow redmen in the hope of receiving these bounties, and it is but natural that the hostile Indian retaliated, not only against the friendly Indians, but against the white man."

Indian depredations were few and far between on the frontier, compared with the number of immigrants; but reports from our cultured and populous centers show that during the past seven years six thousand persons in Chicago have been shot. The same city reports a total number of arrests for 1915 of 121,714 persons. Press reports chronicle 818 arrests for the city of Des Moines, Iowa, during the month of July, 1917. It would require some speed by the several tribes of Indians to match these records of crime and misconduct.

The Indians had no ponderous written law volumes for their guidance, but regardless of our statutes there were fifty-five negroes lynched in the United States in 1915, by white men and women; and the perpetrators of these heinous crimes were not at all particular to make sure they captured the guilty party. The execution of any black man seemed to appease the wrath of the civilized white man. The stock charge of assault was not always sustained; and statistics show that burnings have occurred when the victim was guilty only of vagrancy and other light offenses. From the hundreds of reports which might be cited from the press, I quote but one:

"Two negroes and one negress near Savannah, Tennessee, were burned to death by white tenants who objected to the occupancy of land by negroes. The negroes were going to market with a load of seed cotton. They were tied to the load of cotton, and after building a fire beneath it, the mob stood guard while the negroes were cremated."

These outrageous crimes are being committed today. Are we to suppose that pioneers of three score years ago were always punctilious in their treatment or dealings with Indians?

Recent statistics show that in the United States, within seventeen months, 4,217 wives were murdered by their husbands. With these facts before us the bloody record of the Indian fades a little in hue. When we read of opera house hangings so the elite of society may witness the physical manifestations of strangulation; when we note the record of private lynching parties and public executions as holiday festivals, (read Georgia and Mississippi statistics for August, 1915,) we are constrained to admit that the war-dance of red-skinned savages about the forms of their captured victims cannot approximate the sports of the cultured, pale-faced product of our enlightened age.

Our Anglo-Saxon cousins, as late as 1870, listed one hundred and sixty crimes punishable by death. We have eliminated a large number from this list; but the members of modern society commit crimes and depredations which make necessary the maintenance of fourteen thousand prisons, and an annual expenditure of six billions of dollars for machinery of conviction and other expenses. Since our rules of life today are so remote from the spirit of reciprocity, are we not presumptious even to expect the semblance of mutuality in the primitive races of pioneer times?

I quote from the reply to a personal letter of inquiry addressed to Professor Frederick Starr, anthropologist of the Chicago University, in regard to the characteristic cruelty charged by so many authors against the Indians, he says: "I know of no tribe of American Indians who are deserving of the terms wanton cruelty, and vengefulness. I did not suppose anyone made such claims nowadays."

It is difficult for an interested individual to view an injury from a disinterested standpoint, or to consider a community grievance with national consideration. Conditions arise in the path of progress which, whether locally detri-

mental or beneficial, produce unvarying results; and on the possibility of being considered by a judicious, analytical mind depends the accuracy or bias of history.

The red race, as a whole, no more should be blamed for the depredations of various hostile bands of Indians than the Caucasians, as a race, should be censured for black-hand societies or the kuklux klan. It would be very unreasonable and unjust to condemn the Italian people because of the existence of the Mafia, or Christianity for its recreant ministers, or a community for its several "black sheep."

Henry L. and Edwin Sabin, in "The Making of Iowa," record this statement: "Let us bear in mind that the Sacs and Foxes, the Iowas and the Sioux, and all the rest were but men and women as are all the white people. They loved their homes; they loved their relatives; they were brave in defense of their rights. The more we learn of the Indians, especially of their life before the whites corrupted them with liquor and false promises, the more we will respect them. * * * They were honest and paid their debts more promptly than did the whites."

The American Indian, according to his degree of development, is exactly like the white race. There are friendly and vicious individuals who command a certain following; there are true and treacherous members of both races. There are intelligent, broad-minded men seeking the good of all; and opposed to them is the selfish element seeking power and prestige.

The red, black, brown or yellow races hold the same relative position in the estimation of the white man—that of an inferior; therefore, they are the legitimate prey of his dominant mentality and physical efficiency. While the white man's power or craft are in the ascendancy he, of course, will hold his position. Power delegated or usurped invariably has been abused, and to hope for the voluntary relinquishment of such hold upon any race—or a portion of our own race—before the influence of education has done its work, were to hope for the unattainable.

General Randolph B. Marcy says: "Nearly all the troubles we have encountered with the Indian tribes for the last fifty years has resulted from the noncompliance, on our part, with treaty stipulations, together with the injustice and fraud practiced upon them by dishonest agents."

Randall Parrish, in The Great Plains, says of early immigration over the Santa Fe Trail: "During all the later years the Indian tribes were restless and dangerous. * * * This hostility of the savages can be traced back to the reckless barbarism of the teamsters themselves. The Santa Fe Trail became a trail of blood, yet it was peaceful enough until wanton shooting of Indians by whites compelled the tribes to retaliate. In the earliest days a man could have walked in safety the entire distance."

General Nelson A. Miles says: "The whole history of our dealings with the Indians has been one process after another of obtaining from the Indians what the white man wanted, with little scruple about methods. We disregarded treaties, sold the Indians into slavery in some states and pushed them back into the wilderness and toward extinction."

The success of pioneering from the Atlantic to the Pacific became more rapidly possible because of the assistance and co-operation of friendly red men. That small numbers of hostile bands held up the advance guard of settlement is but an incident in the march of progress.

It is a matter of record that after the Puritan fathers landed on the American continent they first "fell upon their knees, and then upon the aborigines." The same policy has been continued throughout the years by various arms of the government and lawless members of society. Whether mistakenly or intentionally does not change the record of results.

It is a well known fact that the Indian wars of history were fought on the one side by Indians who were hostile to white invasion, and by white men and friendly Indians on the other. It likewise is well known, and admitted by Mrs. Sharp, that the negotiations of the governor of Minnesota

for the relinquishment of captives taken at the Spirit Lake massacre, could not have been concluded favorably except for the assistance of friendly Indians.

Our outlook upon life is: whatever appears to benefit us most, seems just to us; whatever promises displeasure or detriment is declared to be unjust. Whether this reasoning can be sustained from a humane standpoint matters not; the fact remains. The advent of the white man into the hunting grounds of the Indian did not presage benefits for the so-called savage. The invasion appeared to be unjust to many, therefore to be opposed and the offenders punished. The color line cannot be drawn on this statement; its boundary is not tribal or even national; the law of self-preservation—of sustaining and maintaining the race—is as virile in one branch of the tree of humanity as another.

The strife for supremacy has been well shown in the world war with its waste of money and men; with its disregard for personal and property rights; with its demand for sacred and profane sacrifices; with its holocaust of hate and horrors; with its burial of ideals and inspirations and its records of disease, debauchery and disaster—the world war emphasizes the fact that today civilization essentially is savagery. It also places the consideration of early Indian depredations in a class by themselves and out of the lists in competition.

The two general methods followed by the Indians—that of hostile opposition and that of peaceful submission to white domination—both seem to have failed. The first, those opposing invasion, have been sacrificed without mercy; the second, the peacable tribes, have been demoralized by idleness and the various vices of a white man's civilization. These changes were thrust so suddenly upon the victims that no time was given for constitutional or intellectual evolution; so, these sons of nature rapidly are being eliminated from the equation of progress.

The moderation which should characterize our attitude toward an aggressor; the toleration which should be exer-

cised toward a so-called inferior, and the consideration which should make always possible just decisions for both —these may be slow in materializing, but they must materialize if we are to answer, affirmatively, the question: "Am I my brother's keeper?"

APPENDIX V.

To my

PARENTS,

who helped to subdue the wilderness,

and to those

WHO APPRECIATE THE DIGNITY OF LABOR,

these verses are lovingly inscribed by

HARRIET BONEBRIGHT-CLOSZ.

The Iowa Log Cabin was written many years ago on the occasion of a birthday visit to the old homestead.

The Iowa Log Cabin.

In taking stock of fleeing years,
My mind, intent, doth roam
To early days and duties,
In the old log cabin home.
I view again the rough hewn logs—
The plastering of clay
That chinks the gaping crevices,
The winters' winds to stay.

The rough stone chimney at the end
Is crumbling here and there;
We judged, from shifting course of smoke,
The weather foul or fair.
Out there's the smokehouse where we stored
The venison supply;
And just beyond, the river, where
Half-buried fish-traps lie.

From hick'ry pole frame near the creek
The iron kettle swings;
Its wide expanse and depth immense,
Served us for many things.
In it we washed, hulled hominy,
And rendered out the lard;
We simmered syrup, heated wax,
And made soap—soft or hard.

The "prairie schooner" stands beside
A pile of hickory logs;
A store for blacksmith tools and chains,
And shelter for the dogs.
The patient oxen wait the yoke,
Nor do they try to shirk
The grubbing, logging, teaming
Or other arduous work.

Upon the great flat stone before
The single door I stand;
I grasp and pull the leathern latch—
The good old rawhide brand;
The home-made hick'ry hinges yield—
The sagging oaken door
In opening, harshly scrapes upon
The warped old puncheon floor.

I muse, the fireplace beside;
I view the mantle shelf;
Its wondrous weight of ornament
That holds no hint of pelf.
The clay-packed hearth, the iron dogs,
The hooks, and prods, and tongs;
The rosy, rushing, sweeping flames
Paint pictures and sing songs.

The quaint old four-post bed still stands
Close up against the wall;
How loud its well-taxed cordage creaked,
I very well recall.
The circling curtains reach the floor,
With purpose to conceal
Surplus supplies and implements—
Their presence is quite real!

Above the door, two forked sticks
Support the rifle old,
That's eloquent with tragic lore
And deeds of valor bold;
The shot-pouch and the powder-horn
Hang ready to the hands—
Against the wall, for quick defense,
The trusty broad-ax stands.

The bales of wool and spinning wheel
Beside the door find room;
The hatchel, distaff, cards and rolls
Repose beneath the loom.
Ax-helves and ox-yokes seasoning,
Rest on the upper beams;
A cobbler's "kit," bootjacks and combs—
They're here at hand, it seems!

The "hall-trees" made of wooden pegs
Are stapled in the wall;
Shelves have the same supporters firm,
And ne'er were known to fall
Beneath their burden's pond'rous weight
Of dish and box and pot—
Of woodenware and food supplies,
Of powder-keg and shot.

The rings of pumpkin placed to dry
Festoon the space o'erhead;
The skillet at the fireplace
Was used to bake corn bread;
A tin, with many rough nail-holes—
Unknown to modern trade—
Served first to grate the corn, before
The "dodger" could be made.

At eve, a saucer filled with grease,
A braided rag for wick
And blazing fore-log furnished light;
Anon, I hear the click
Of needles knitting; the supply
Of clothing grows apace,
As women sew and weave—while men
Cast bullets for the chase.

A trap door here, just at the right,
Discloses 'neath the floor
A deep-dug pit, well strewn with hay,
Where's kept the winter's store
Of garden truck; and often when
The weather was severe,
The porkers young, and shiv'ring calves
Found cozy shelter here.

I climb the ladder to the loft,
Beneath the rafters low;
Where oft the beds were covered o'er
With lightly sifted snow.
No ventilating air-device—
Our system was the best—
An un-chinked crevice 'neath the eaves—
And nature did the rest.

The trundle-bed for company,
Is dressed with softer store
Than other lumpy, hay-stuffed ticks,
Which deck the attic floor.
The children who go first to bed,
Pre-empt the best in sight;
Which leads to prompt retirement—
Perhaps, a childish fight.

* * * * *

But changes came with passing years;
These children now are grey.
Palatial homes and schools have grown
Where once they used to play.
The haunts where roamed the savage beast,
Now yield a bounteous store
Of food for tens of thousands,
And reserve for thousands more.

The early settlers' cabin homes
Have fallen to decay;
The "Star of Empire" still moves on,
"Still westward takes its way."
Each generation has its work,
The fact now is quite clear —
That none have builded better
Than the IOWA PIONEER.

The State of Iowa.

Come Yankee farmers, list' to me!
And heed this glowing song,
That you may prosperous become—
Live happy, well, and long.
If you're courageous, hopeful, wise,
Enlist without delay,
And join the ox-team movers, who
Are bound for Iowa.

The way is long, the waters deep,
The trail almost unknown.
The bitter hardships of the trip,
Need not, just here, be shown.
We think, instead, of joys beyond;
Of benefits which may
Accrue to all the people, from
Our trip to Iowa.

Why be content in eastern states,
Where hills and rocks abound?
And prices soar quite out of sight,
For barren tracts of ground.
Out west, the fields for miles and miles,
Stretch endlessly away
With billowy waves of grain and grass,
In pleasant Iowa.

Why hesitate to leave the land
The York State worker owns?
It yields but scant subsistence, and
Swells large, the list of loans.
The ripened grain-stacks dot the fields,
The bins are full, they say,
With surplus for the immigrants;
In fruitful Iowa.

We'll guide the teams through hoosierland,
Where pilgrims have remained,
Faint-hearted, and well satisfied,
To miss what might be gained.
The buckeye, badger, gopher plains,
We'll cross with steady gait,
And journey, joyously, until
We reach the Hawkeye state.

Our soil is full of Nature's food;
'Tis rich, and black, and deep.
It yields full crops for man and beast,
If we but plant and reap.
The rivers wander toward the gulf,
They dance, and sing, and play;
A million shining fish, swim through
The streams of Iowa.

The deer and elk, the wild-game birds,
Seem fearlessly to wait
The advent of the hunting-hounds,
Into the new-named state.
The animals with fine fur coats,
Of black, or brown, or grey,
Assures both revenue and clothes
For men in Iowa.

The springs pour from the earth's broad breast,
Life's clear streams for the brave
Who seek for pure refreshment, and
In their cool waters lave.
The wooded slopes which skirt the streams
With autumn's bright array,
Provide the wood, and warmth, within
Productive Iowa.

Come, follow us! we'll move along,
With step full, firm and free;
We'll plow the fields and bridge the streams,
And fell the forest tree.
As we for homes and future peace,
The firm foundations lay,
'Twill add a rich endowment to
The future Iowa.

So, westward turn, we'll head the march!
With other comrades dear;
The pioneers' hard lot we'll face,
Without a qualm of fear.
The Mississippi and Des Moines
We'll ford along our way,
And end our journey at the Boone,
In dear, old Iowa.

The Cat-Hole in the Door.

As o'er the pages of the past,
My memory lightly plays,
I'm borne on visions' misty wings,
Back to my childhood days.
One great affliction of my youth,
Still thrills me as of yore;
This source of deadly terror, was
The cat-hole in the door.

In trembling dread I often sat
The fireplace beside;
While sparks and flames swept roaring, up
The chimney deep and wide.
But still, above the family chat,
Above the storm's fierce roar,
I'd hear the whistling wind sweep through
The cat-hole in the door.

And then I'd press close to the fire,
Within its spread of light.
Filled with a fear for folks detained,
Who journeyed through the night.
I'd think of white-robed ghosts that prowled
Through tales of ancient lore,
And, doubtless, gained an entrance through
The cat-hole in the door.

One stormy night, weird tales were told,
Of bloody Indian strife;
And of the perils that beset,
The pioneers' hard life.
I glanced behind me where the light
Cast shadows on the floor,
And thought I saw a shape creep through
The cat-hole in the door.

The howling tempest gathered strength;
The tree-tops groaned and creaked.
The bay of dogs was heard, the while
The winds terrific, shrieked.
A human-sounding cry broke forth,
And pierced my being's core,
As Tom, and Tab, and Spot trooped through
The cat-hole in the door.

Loitering Amid the Old Scenes.

How often I think of the scenes that have vanished,
The hurrying years my reflections compel;
They're freighted with mem'ries distressing and painful,
With commonplace stories, and joyous, as well.
The old settlers' stories—
The pioneers' stories—
The hard-luck old stories,
We love to re-tell!

The bright sunny hillslopes where rest our loved comrades;
The trail through the woods, and the sweet, earthy smell;
The thickets of bushes surrounding the cabin,
Where, nightly, the wolves raised their hideous yell.
The old-time log cabin—
The one-windowed cabin—
The shake-covered cabin,
We all loved so well!

The old prairie schooner—the pioneers' shelter
From wild beast and savage, its purpose served well.
The needful equipment, in closely packed strata,
At each overturning its contents would swell.
The old covered wagon—
The hickory-bowed wagon—
The solid-wheeled wagon,
Which did its work well!

From white sandy depths gushed the bubbling spring water,
Beneath the old oak tree, in vine-verdant dell;
The path down the hillslope sought friendship with morning,
And snakes sunning there, sent us homeward pell-mell.
The silver spring-water—
The ne'er failing water—
The health-giving water,
No drink can excel!

The clearings encircled by stake-ridered fences,
Where slab-sided porkers remained but a spell;
When free, they were friendly; rejecting confinement—
Their fence-scaling work was most wondrous to tell.
The old-time worm fences—
The seven rail fences—
The zig-zag old fences,
The hogs climbed so well!

The brindle old oxen, with strength in abundance,
Would oft break away and in speeding excel;
Or lay down to rest when our hurry was greatest,
Nor "tailing," nor goading could movement compel.
The rough-coated oxen—
The hard-working oxen—
The patient old oxen,
We rode to the well!

In rich, sloughy muck, which has now become famous,
The "stuck in the mud," was a sad tale to tell;
While pulling the "critters" from miry positions,
To rescuers, sturdy, a sad fate befell.
The breachy old critters—
The fence-horning critters—
The pail-kicking critters,
That no one could sell!

The hair-pulling contests among all the youngsters,
Whose howls would do credit to "Soo Injun" yell;
The "Oil of the hick'ry" applied by our mother,
On sports pugilistic, at once rung the knell.
The green hazel switches—
The withy birch switches—
The tough hick'ry switches,
A story could tell!

The settlers partook of the bounty of neighbors
With freedom and joy. There was nothing to sell.
Did sickness befall, or misfortune attend them,
Assistance awaited, good cheer to compel.
The dear old-home neighbors—
The staunch, friendly neighbors—
The true-blue old neighbors,
Whatever befell!

The visits and cooking, the parties and dancing,
With building and planting, the "blues" would dispel;
The hunting and trapping, the chopping and firing,
Was need quite sufficient, with work to excel.
The deer-hunting parties—
The working-bee parties—
The old dancing parties,
Enjoyed were, so well!

* * * * *

I'd love to return to the scenes of my childhood,
And feel the full tide of the blood's youthful swell;
Forget all the heartache, deceit and dissembling,
And lessons un-learn, which the senses repel.
The old scenes of childhood—
The far-distant childhood—
The mem'ries of childhood,
Which make the heart swell!

I joy in the spirit of pioneer pastimes;
Of fireside pleasures; in field or on fell;
That helped in the gracious dispensing of favors
With unselfish bounty, so worthy and well.
The good old-time spirit—
The free-hearted spirit—
The true-service spirit,
All shams can dispel!

The Old Brass Candle-Molds.

Grandmother had discovered the discarded candle-molds among the attic waste and rubbish. She burnished, decorated and placed them in the living room where they were seen for the first time by the young granddaughter who soliloquized as follows:

"Here's something new, and quite unique upon the mantle tree;
Its purposes now quite confuse, and greatly puzzle me.

Its slender shining metal tubes, stand closely side by side.
Just at the smooth and tapering ends, soft rolls of white are tied.

Is it some strange, new instrument for making music sweet?
Is harmony here slumbering, to wake through fingers fleet?

Maybe it is a register, a merchant's cash to count,
Since business fast increases, and high, finances mount.

Or can it be some queer machine, explosives to conceal?
And sure when skillfully arranged, its deadly work to deal?

See! they are made with six smooth tubes, about a foot in length.
They taper to an end of points—perhaps to furnish strength.

Then this small opening at the end—why should men wish to kill?
It must be for the timing-fuse! It makes my heart stand still!

I'll go and ask my grandma, wise, she'll surely make this clear;
For 'till its purpose I find out, I'm bound to persevere."

"Why, yes, my dear," said grandmama, "the past, its secret holds;
This bunch of shining cylinders, are old, brass, candle-molds.

I brought them from obscurity among the garret waste;
I scoured off the coating, green, with which they were encased.

You see, some sixty years ago, the firelight helped our sight;
Or with grease-dish, and rag for wick, we improvised a light.

Our methods could not rival, then, the present-day device
For flooding space with brilliancy, at meter-measured price.

No turn of thumbscrew brought the gas, or quickly turned it down;
The 'lectric current did not come from power-house in town.

Laboriously we always toiled, cut wicks in many folds;
Used beeswax, lard or tallow to fill these candle-molds.

We'd twist, and double this soft cord, and thread it through the mold;
Slip cross-sticks through the loops above, the wicking, firm, to hold.

The wick that's through the small eye strung, and tied close to the frame,
Prevents escaping grease. When cold, 't is cut to loosen same.

Beef tallow for material, would best our purpose suit;
But beeswax, muttonfat, and lard, made fairest substitute.

We'd melt, and mix, and strain the grease; and cool outside
the door;
Reject the refuse in the pot. Then melt and strain once
more."

When filled, the old brass candle-molds were set aside
a while.
When lifted out, the beauties, smooth, enhanced the mold-
er's smile.

Sometimes, if tallow was too cool, air-pockets caused a
break;
Then, oft, they'd stick fast to the sides, and some slight
trouble make.

When such contingency arose, we'd pass the molds through
flame;
And when they were at last released, we'd swab and fill
again.

And so, the process was kept up, till grease would disap-
pear;
And these old molds were passed along to neighbors, far
and near.

But we were quite as happy then, with ceaseless, homely
work,
As now—when luxury abounds—we seek, sometimes, to
shirk.

We did not wish to gain the goal—to toil not, nor to spin—
We knew that sloth induced decay, and is the deadly sin.

And so, the spirit of the past, the kindly message holds,
Of industry, and peace, and joy, within these candle-
molds."

The achievements of pioneers are credited, tacitly at least, to the men. I chronicle some of the efforts of the women which were quite as necessary to success as the apparently larger accomplishments in the fields of general improvement and progress.

The Women's Work.

From east to west, through hardship's wood,
Who by the settler firmly stood;
And helped the pioneer make good?
The women folks.

Who planted garden, hoed the weeds,
In hazel-stubble or in meads;
And thus prepared for winter's needs?
The women folks.

Who grated corn the evening through,
For breakfast "dodger," for the crew
Of hungry hunters to review?
The women folks.

Who calmly rose at early morn,
And "milked the mooley cow forlorn;"
And watched the critters from the corn?
The women folks.

Who drew and scaled the many fish,
The smell of which would make one wish
Demand would cease for such a dish?
The women folks.

Who made the hominy and soap,
Boiled sap for all the sugar "dope;"
From maples 'long the river's slope?
The women folks.

Who carded, hetcheled, rolled, and spun,
The wool and flax, each season's run,
And from the work extracted fun?
The women folks.

Who knit the scarfs, and hoods, and socks.
And washed the wool from many flocks,
And dipped it in the dyeing-pots?
The women folks.

Who wove the cloth, and garments made,
And, if considered up to grade,
The work and worry were repaid?
The women folks.

Who patched the clothes of boys and men,
Worn out and torn in wood and glen,
And next day patched them o'er again?
The women folks.

Who fashioned moccasins and mits,
Of skin or jeans—so oft misfits—
Who knitting tales now sure befits?
The women folks.

Who picked the fowls for feather beds,
Where weary workers laid their heads,
Upon the one-legged, homemade beds?
The women folks.

Who was the quilter, washer, cook,
Who carried water from the brook;
And for assistance did not look?
The women folks.

Who doctored infant, youth or age,
Who guided feet out on the stage;
Or wrote the last word on life's page?
The women folks.

Without a thought the work to cease,
Who toiled in hopefulness and peace,
That happiness they might increase?
The women folks.

The Linsey Woolsey Dress.

The girls adorned in silken garb,
Would shout with mirth, I know;
If they could view the dresses worn
Some sixty years ago.

The airy puffs and folds, today,
Are beauties, I confess;
And mark a vivid contrast with
The linsey-woolsey dress.

The rough-goods fads in style, betimes,
Come—reign, and pass away;
But linsey-woolsey methods were
Not what they are today.

The tightly twisted warp—the woof
Well beaten in the loom,
Produced a cloth that wore like steel,
And checked the "new dress" boom.

The neutral-colored "home-made" dress
Out-wore the present gown.
The bolts of goods, and garments old,
For years were handed down.

We climbed the trees, and scaled the fence,
And slid o'er cabin shakes;
But linsey-woolsey did not tear,
Wear out, or show thread-breaks.

The stuff for linsey dresses, then,
Seemed coarser far, to me,
Than roughest blanket for the horse,
Which now we often see.

The checks and stripes of browns, and blues,
With yellow threads thrown in;
They dyed, designed, and woven by
Our grandma's, old, had been.

And then the dress! So comfortless—
So unbecoming, quite;
The picture now returns to me,
And tears bedim my sight.

The childish form was buttoned in
The waist, so tight and safe;
The neck-band knew no softened frill,
To ease its constant chafe.

The arm eyelets were cut too small;
The seams were rough and thick.
To hold the arms akimbo, was
A self-protecting trick.

The tender flesh rubbed raw and sore;
And caused us much distress,
From close and constant contact with
The linsey-woolsey dress.

The snug security of sleeves,
Outrivaled far, the waist;
For greater ease, arms might have been
In iron bands encased.

Half to the elbow sleeves would creep,
As tighter they became;
The forearms swelled, discolored, and
Weighed down as lead, the same.

Oh, chafing neck, and sore chapped wrists!
We sense the pain and stress
Of childish indignation, with
The linsey-woolsey dress.

The skirt was plaited, full and long,
And could have spared, quite well,
A width to loosen waist and sleeves;
And discontent dispel.

About the knees, a bunch of tucks,
Resembling hempen rope,
Served well to spread its ample folks
In wondrous, circling scope.

As children thrived, and forms grew tall,
Tucks were "let out;" the charms
Of nether limbs must be concealed;
'T was not so with the arms.

As wearers plumped with age and weight,
And buttons, old, pulled loose,
String-loops were tied in buttonholes;
A sure, but unkind ruse.

When nature finally o'er filled
Straight-jackets in this class,
The big girls' half-worn hand-me-downs,
Fell to the little lass.

The girls today, with frills and puffs,
And loosely fitting sack,
Can't comprehend our miseries,
Of sixty years aback.

I oft recall that once I stood,
Too near the stove, in school;
The old "long John" that ate the wood
Cut by the four-foot rule.

The smell, and smoke of burning wool,
Filled all the air around;
And so, the children in the group,
Began to search—and found

The charred and crumbling yellow flakes,
A sticky, woolen mess—
Adorned the front-most portion of
My linsey-woolsey dress.

My heart sank low with deep regret,
But thought, amid despair—
"Perchance, I now can have a dress,
Like girls more favored wear."

But hope departed. I found soon,
Too light the family purse;
With no reserve of cloth, the same,
Made matters ten times worse.

Nor tears nor anger gained relief
From poverty's dark woods;
I was compelled to wear the dress
Patched with a different goods.

It seems absurd, as I recall
The crushing, real distress,
Induced by my aversion to
The linsey-woolsey dress.

The Old Grindstone.

The incidents of "airly" days,
With pleasure we relate.
The tales of hardships now long past,
We sometimes may inflate;
But thoughts of one experience
Still chills us to the bone;
'Twas when our elders called us out
To turn the old grindstone.

The dreaded summons often came—
No matter what the hour;
And other work or sport was stopped
To furnish motive power
For sharp'ning corn knife, ax or scythe,
In relays or alone;
We ached and cried the while we toiled
Beside the old grindstone.

When "working-bees" were being planned,
The help for many a mile
Would bring their implements, and chat,
And "sharpen-up" meanwhile.
They'd say: "Young ones should earn their keep,
Their bacon and corn pone;"
And then we knew our fate was fixed
To turn the old grindstone.

And how those "grown-ups" would bear on,
And say to us: "Turn fast!"
Till panting breath and flaming face,
Warned them to stop, at last
To try the "aige" and light the pipe,
While we, with inward moan,
Would wait the final smoothing work
Upon the old grindstone.

No well-adjusted belts had we,
Like those in use today;
No treadle geared to do the work
With ease akin to play.
But hickory pole, on sawbuck frame,
Supported discs of stone;
At every turn the handle made
Unearthly creak and groan.

At times we saw our father with
The cradle on his arm,
Start from the clearing to the house;
And we, in wild alarm,
Would hide to shirk the grinding; but
Our error soon was shown,
For mother then at once was called
To turn the old grindstone.

We smile as we remember now
The scenes of early life;
The many hardships, hopes and fears,
With which the times were rife;
But this experience remains,
And stands forth quite alone—
The agonizing hours we worked
Beside the old grindstone!

The Dugout.

The dugout was from hillsides' face cleared deep,
Or from the river's cliff or jutting ledge;
With door bough-screened, and bed a leafy heap,
The woodsman found, fulfilled, its restful pledge.

The dugout was a boat—a wondrous shell,
From log of goodly size, pealed clean and sleek;
The chamber charred with skill, with care adzed well.
For traffic use on bayou, pond or creek.

The dugout was a cradle deep but rough;
Halved, scooped and fashioned as the log canoe;
With pillows piled, with quilts of fleece and fluff,
A cozy nest supplied for babies two.

The dugout was a useful bowl, likewise,
From round, or square, or oblong block of wood;
For trough, or tub, or any table size—
For tanning-vat and manger-box were good.

The dugout was from garden growths quite round—
The handled-gourd, the turnip smooth, or beet;
Cup, dipper, lamp—though cleared of pulp, still sound—
Served not in winter, but through summer's heat.

The dugout was a cave for garden truck;
Beneath the frost-line, deep, 'twas dug with care:
The stores were crowned with hay—no trust in luck—
And so, preserved for family winter fare.

* * * * *

The dugout, olden, many mem'ries call;
To minds of pioneers they still are clear:
Hardships and danger marked them; but withal—
We happy-hearted were, and free from fear.

RD 1.04.

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